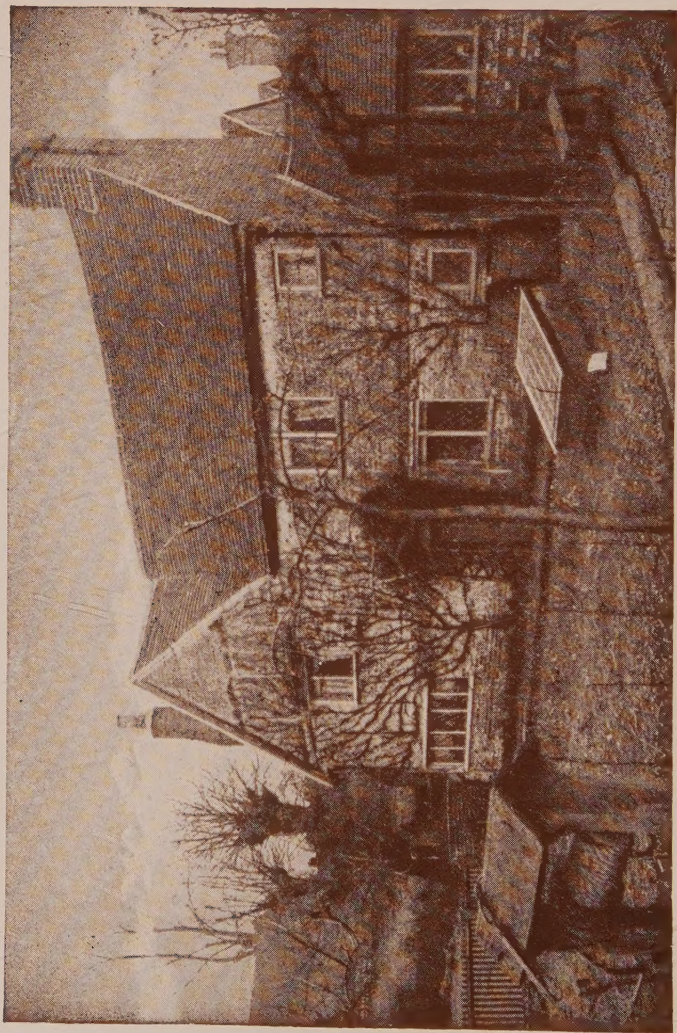


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*Milton's Cottage, Chalfont St. Giles, from the garden*  
*The only house now standing in which Milton is known to have lived*

THE HARVARD CLASSICS  
EDITED BY CHARLES W ELIOT LL D



THE COMPLETE POEMS OF  
JOHN MILTON

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

VOLUME 4



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

AMONG English men of letters there is none whose life and work stand in more intimate relation with the history of his times than those of Milton. Not only was he for a long period immersed in political controversy and public business, but there are few of his important works which do not become more significant in the light of contemporary events, and in turn help the understanding of these events themselves. It is evidence of this intimate relation, that the periods into which his life naturally falls coincide with the periods into which English history in the seventeenth century divides itself. The first of these extends from Milton's birth to his return from Italy, and corresponds with that period in the reigns of James I and Charles I during which the religious and political differences which culminated in the Civil War were working up to a climax. The second ends with his retirement into private life in 1660, and coincides with the period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth. The third closes with his death in 1674, and falls within the period of the Restoration.

John Milton was born in Bread Street, London, on the ninth of December, 1608. He was the son of John Milton, a prosperous scrivener (i. e., attorney and law-stationer), a man of good family and considerable culture, especially devoted to music. In the education of the future poet the elder Milton was exceptionally generous. From childhood he destined him for the Church, and the preparation begun at home was continued at St. Paul's School and at Cambridge. We have abundant evidence that the boy was from the first a quick and diligent student, and the late study to which he was addicted from childhood was the beginning of that injury to his eyes which ended in blindness. He entered Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625, took the degree of B. A. in 1629, and that of M. A. in 1632, when he left the University after seven years' residence. But the development of affairs in the English Church had overturned his plans, and the interference of Laud with freedom of thought and preaching among the clergy led Milton "to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking bought with servitude and forswearing." So he retired

to his father's house at Horton in Buckinghamshire, and devoted the next six years to quiet study and the composition of a few poems.

In 1638 Milton set out on a journey to Italy. After some days in Paris, he passed on by way of Nice to Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence, in which last city he spent about two months in the society of wits and men of letters. After two months more spent in Rome, he visited Naples, and had intended to cross to Sicily and go thence to Greece, when 'rumors of civil war in England led him to turn his face homeward, "inasmuch," he says, "as I thought it base to be traveling at my ease for intellectual culture while my countrymen at home were fighting for liberty." His writings produced abroad were all in Italian or Latin, and seem to have brought him considerable distinction among the Italian men of letters whom he met.

Yet Milton did not plunge rashly into the political conflict. After he returned from the Continent, the household at Horton was broken up, and he went to London to resume his studies, and decide on the form and subject of his great poem. Part of his time was occupied in teaching his two nephews, and afterward he took under his care a small number of youths, sons of his friends. In 1643 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of an Oxfordshire Royalist. In about a month she left him and remained away for two years, at the end of which time she sought and obtained a reconciliation. She died in 1653 or 1654, leaving him three little daughters.

The main occupation of his first years in London was controversy. Liberty was Milton's deepest passion, and in liberty we sum up the theme of his prose writings. There are "three species of liberty," he says, "which are essential to the happiness of social life—religious, domestic, and civil," and for all three he fought. His most important prose works may, indeed, be roughly classed under these heads: under religious, his pamphlets against Episcopacy; under domestic, his works on Education, Divorce, and the Freedom of the Press; under civil, his controversial writings on the overthrow of the monarchy. In all of these he strove for freedom and toleration; and when England became a Republic, he became officially associated with the new government as Secretary of Foreign Tongues, in which capacity he not only conducted its foreign correspondence, but also acted as its literary adviser

and champion in the controversies by pamphlet that arose in connection with the execution of the King and the theory of the Commonwealth. It was in the midst of these activities that a great calamity overtook him. The defence of the late King had been undertaken by the famous Dutch Latinist Salmasius in a "*Defensio Regis*," and to Milton fell the task of replying to it. His eyesight, weakened even in childhood by overstudy, was now failing fast, and he was warned by physicians that it would go altogether if he persisted in this work. But to Milton the fight he had entered on was no mere matter of professional employment as it was to his opponent, and he deliberately sacrificed what remained of him of light in the service of the cause to which he was devoted. The reply was a most effective one, but it left Milton hopelessly blind. With the aid of an assistant, however, he retained his office through the Protectorate of Cromwell, until the eve of the Restoration.

Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, his son Richard succeeded him for a short time, and in 1660 Charles II was restored to the throne. To the last Milton fought with tremendous earnestness against this catastrophe. For, to him, it was indeed a catastrophe. The return of the Stuarts meant to him not only great personal danger, but, what was far more important, it meant the overthrow of all that he had for twenty years spent himself to uphold. It meant the setting up in government, in religion, and in society, of ideals and institutions that he could not but regard as the extreme of reaction and national degradation. Almost by a miracle he escaped personal violence, but he was of necessity forced into obscure retirement; and there, reduced in fortune, blind, and broken-hearted, he devoted himself to the production of "*Paradise Lost*" and "*Paradise Regained*." The great schemes which in his early manhood he had planned and dreamed over had for years been laid aside; but now at last he had a mournful leisure, and with magnificent fortitude he availed himself of the opportunity.

"*Paradise Lost*" had been begun even before the King's return; in 1665 it was finished, and in 1667 the first edition appeared. "*Paradise Regained*" and "*Samson Agonistes*" were published in 1671.

In 1657 Milton's second wife, Catherine Woodcock, had died. For about seven years after, he lived alone with his three daugh-



ters, whom he trained to read to him not merely in English, but in Latin, Greek, Italian, French, Spanish, and Hebrew, though they did not understand a word of what they read. What little we know of their relations to their father is not pleasant. They seem to have been rebellious and undutiful, though doubtless there was much provocation. In 1663 Milton took a third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who did much to give ease and comfort to his last years, and who long survived him.

The retirement in which he lived during this third period, when public affairs seemed to him to have gone all wrong, was not absolutely solitary. The harshness that appears in his controversial writings, and the somewhat unsympathetic austerity that seems to be indicated by his relations with his first wife and his children, are to be counterbalanced in our minds by the impression of companionableness that we derive from the picture of the old blind poet, sought out by many who not merely admired his greatness, but found pleasure in his society, and counted it a privilege to talk with him and read to him. Stern and sad he could hardly fail to be, but his old age was peaceful and not bitter. He died on November 8, 1674, and was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London.

In spite of Milton's association with the Puritan party in the political struggles of his time, the common habit of referring to him as "the Puritan poet" is seriously misleading. The Puritans of the generation of Milton's father were indeed often men of culture and love of the arts, but the Puritans of the Civil War, the Puritans whom we think of to-day in our ordinary use of the term, were in general men who had not only no interest in art, but who regarded beauty itself as a temptation of the evil one. Even a slight study of Milton's works will convince the reader that to this class Milton could never have belonged. Side by side with his love of liberty and his enthusiasm for moral purity—qualities in which even then the Puritans had no monopoly—Milton was passionately devoted to beauty; and the reason why his work survives to-day is not because part of it expresses the Puritan theology, but because of its artistic qualities—above all because it is at once more faultless and more nobly sustained in music than that of any other English poet.

# THE POEMS OF JOHN MILTON

## WRITTEN AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

1624-1632

### ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

(1629)

#### I

**T**HIS is the month, and this the happy morn,  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,  
Of wedded maid and Virgin Mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring;  
For so the holy sages once did sing,  
That he our deadly forfeit should release,  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

#### II

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table  
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,  
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,  
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,  
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

#### III

Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein  
Afford a present to the Infant God?  
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,  
To welcome him to this his new abode,  
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,

Hath took no print of the approaching light,  
 And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons  
 bright?

## IV

See how from far upon the Eastern road  
 The star-led Wisards haste with odours sweet!  
 Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,  
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;  
 Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,  
 And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,  
 From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

## THE HYMN

## I

It was the winter wild,  
 While the heaven-born child  
 All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
 Nature, in awe to him,  
 Had doffed her gaudy trim,  
 With her great Master so to sympathize:  
 It was no season then for her  
 To wanton with the Sun, her lusty Paramour.

## II

Only with speeches fair  
 She woos the gentle air  
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,  
 And on her naked shame,  
 Pollute with sinful blame,  
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;  
 Confounded, that her Maker's eyes  
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

## III

But he, her fears to cease,  
 Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:  
 She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding



Down through the turning sphere,  
 His ready Harbinger,  
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;  
 And, waving wide her myrtle wand,  
 She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

## IV

No war, or battail's sound,  
 Was heard the world around;  
 The idle spear and shield were high uphung;  
 The hookèd chariot stood,  
 Unstained with hostile blood;  
 The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;  
 And Kings sat still with awful eye,  
 As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

## V

But peaceful was the night  
 Wherein the Prince of Light  
 His reign of peace upon the earth began.  
 The winds, with wonder whist,  
 Smoothly the waters kissed,  
 Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,  
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
 While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

## VI

The stars, with deep amaze,  
 Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,  
 Bending one way their precious influence,  
 And will not take their flight,  
 For all the morning light,  
 Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;  
 But in their glimmering orbs did glow,  
 Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

## VII

And, though the shady gloom  
 Had given day her room,  
 The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,

And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame  
The new-enlightened world no more should need:  
He saw a greater Sun appear  
Than his bright Throne or burning axletree could bear.

## VIII

The Shepherds on the lawn,  
Or ere the point of dawn,  
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;  
Full little thought they than  
That the mighty Pan  
Was kindly come to live with them below:  
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

## IX

When such music sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet  
As never was by mortal finger strook,  
Divinely-warbled voice  
Answering the stringèd noise,  
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:  
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,  
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly  
close.

## X

Nature, that heard such sound  
Beneath the hollow round  
Of Cynthia's seat the airy Region thrilling,  
Now was almost won  
To think her part was done,  
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:  
She knew such harmony alone  
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

## XI

At last surrounds their sight  
A globe of circular light,

That with long beams the shamefaced Night  
 arrayed;  
 The helmèd Cherubim  
 And sworded Seraphim  
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,  
 Harping in loud and solemn quire,  
 With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's newborn Heir.

## XII

Such music (as 't is said)  
 Before was never made,  
 But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,  
 While the Creator great  
 His constellations set,  
 And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,  
 And cast the dark foundations deep,  
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

## XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!  
 Once bless our human ears,  
 If ye have power to touch our senses so;  
 And let your silver chime  
 Move in melodious time;  
 And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;  
 And with your ninefold harmony  
 Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

## XIV

For, if such holy song  
 Enwrap our fancy long,  
 Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;  
 And speckled Vanity  
 Will sicken soon and die,  
 And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;  
 And Hell itself will pass away,  
 And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

## XV

Yea, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
The enamelled arras of the rainbow wearing;  
And Mercy set between,  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;  
And Heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

## XVI

But wisest Fate says No,  
This must not yet be so;  
The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy  
That on the bitter cross  
Must redeem our loss,  
So both himself and us to glorify:  
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,  
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through  
the deep,

## XVII

With such a horrid clang  
As on Mount Sinai rang,  
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:  
The aged Earth, aghast  
With terror of that blast,  
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,  
When, at the world's last session,  
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his  
throne.

## XVIII

And then at last our bliss  
Full and perfect is,  
But now begins; for from this happy day  
The Old Dragon under ground,  
In straiter limits bound,  
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,



And, wroth to see his Kingdom fail,  
Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

## XIX

The Oracles are dumb;  
No voice or hideous hum  
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,  
Inspires the pale-eyed Priest from the prophetic cell.

## XX

The lonely mountains o'er,  
And the resounding shore,  
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;  
From haunted spring, and dale  
Edgèd with poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;  
With flower-inwoven tresses torn  
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets  
mourn.

## XXI

In consecrated earth,  
And on the holy hearth,  
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;  
In urns, and altars round,  
A drear and dying sound  
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;  
And the chill marble seems to sweat,  
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

## XXII

Peor and Baälim  
Forsake their temples dim,  
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;  
And moonèd Ashtaroth,  
Heaven's Queen and Mother both,

Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:  
 The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;  
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz  
 mourn.

## XXIII

And sullen Moloch, fled,  
 Hath left in shadows dread  
 His burning idol all of blackest hue;  
 In vain with cymbals' ring  
 They call the grisly king,  
 In dismal dance about the furnace blue;  
 The brutish gods of Nile as fast,  
 Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

## XXIV

Nor is Osiris seen  
 In Memphian grove or green,  
 Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings  
 loud;  
 Nor can he be at rest  
 Within his sacred chest;  
 Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;  
 In vain, with timbreled anthems dark,  
 The sable-stolèd Sorcerers bear his worshiped ark.

## XXV

He feels from Juda's land  
 The dreaded Infant's hand;  
 The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;  
 Nor all the gods beside  
 Longer dare abide,  
 Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:  
 Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,  
 Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

## XXVI

So, when the Sun in bed,  
 Curtained with cloudy red,  
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,

The flocking shadows pale  
Troop to the infernal jail,  
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,  
And the yellow-skirted Fays  
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved  
maze.

## XXVII

But see! the Virgin blest  
Hath laid her Babe to rest,  
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:  
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star  
Hath fixed her polished car,  
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;  
And all about the courtly stable  
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

## A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV

(1624)

WHEN the blest seed of Terah's faithful Son  
After long toil their liberty had won,  
And passed from Pharian fields to Canaanland,  
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand,  
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,  
His praise and glory was in Israel known.  
That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,  
And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head  
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil,  
As a faint host that hath received the foil.  
The high huge-bellied mountains skip like rams  
Amongst their ewes, the little hills like lambs.  
Why fled the ocean? and why skipped the mountains?  
Why turned Jordan toward his crystal fountains?  
Shake, Earth, and at the presence be aghast  
Of Him that ever was and aye shall last,  
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,  
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.

## PSALM CXXXVI

LET us with a gladsome mind  
Praise the Lord for he is kind;  
For his mercies aye endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze his Name abroad,  
For of gods he is the God;  
For his, &c.

O let us his praises tell,  
That doth the wrathful tyrants quell;  
For his, &c.

That with his miracles doth make  
Amazèd Heaven and Earth to shake;  
For his, &c.

That by his wisdom did create  
The painted heavens so full of state;  
For his, &c.

That did the solid Earth ordain  
To rise above the watery plain;  
For his, &c.

That by his all-commanding might,  
Did fill the new-made world with light;  
For his, &c.

And caused the golden-tressèd Sun  
All the day long his course to run;  
For his, &c.

The hornèd Moon to shine by night  
Amongst her spangled sisters bright;  
For his, &c.

He, with his thunder-clasping hand,  
Smote the first-born of Egypt land;  
For his, &c.



And, in despite of Pharao fell,  
 He brought from thence his Israel;  
     For his, &c.

The ruddy waves he cleft in twain  
 Of the Erythræan main;  
     For his, &c.

The floods stood still, like walls of glass,  
 While the Hebrew bands did pass;  
     For his, &c.

But full soon they did devour  
 The tawny King with all his power;  
     For his, &c.

His chosen people he did bless  
 In the wasteful Wilderness;  
     For his, &c.

In bloody battail he brought down  
 Kings of prowess and renown;  
     For his, &c.

He foiled bold Seon and his host,  
 That ruled the Amorrean coast;  
     For his, &c.

And large-limbed Og he did subdue,  
 With all his over-hardy crew;  
     For his, &c.

And to his servant Israel  
 He gave their land, therein to dwell;  
     For his, &c.

He hath, with a piteous eye,  
 Beheld us in our misery;  
     For his, &c.

'And freed us from the slavery  
Of the invading enemy;  
For his, &c.

All living creatures he doth feed,  
And with full hand supplies their need;  
For his, &c.

Let us, therefore, warble forth  
His mighty majesty and worth;  
For his, &c.

That his mansion hath on high,  
Above the reach of mortal eye;  
For his mercies aye endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

# ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH

(1625-26)

## I

O FAIREST Flower, no sooner blown but blasted,  
Soft silken Primrose fading timelessly,  
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted  
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry;  
For he, being amorous on that lovely dye  
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss  
But killed, alas! and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

## II

For since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,  
By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got,  
He thought it touched his deity full near,  
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,  
Thereby to wipe away the infâmous blot  
Of long uncoupled bed and childless eld,  
Which, 'mongst the wanton gods, a foul reproach  
was held.

## III

So, mounting up in icy-pearlèd car,  
 Through middle empire of the freezing air  
 He wandered long, till thee he spied from far;  
 There ended was his quest, there ceased his care:  
 Down he descended from his snow-soft chair,  
     But, all un'wares, with his cold-kind embrace,  
 Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding-place.

## IV

Yet thou art not inglorious in thy fate;  
 For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,  
 Whilom did slay his dearly-lovèd mate,  
 Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas' strand,  
 Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land;  
     But then transformed him to a purple flower:  
 Alack, that so to change thee Winter had no power!

## V

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,  
 Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,  
 Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed  
 Hid from the world in a low-delvèd tomb;  
 Could Heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?  
     Oh no! for something in thy face did shine  
 Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine.

## VI

Resolve me, then, O Soul most surely blest  
 (If so be it that thou these complaints dost hear)  
 Tell me, bright Spirit, where'er thou hoverest,  
 Whether above that high first-moving sphere,  
 Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),  
     Oh, say me true if thou wert mortal wight,  
 And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.

## VII

Wert thou some Star, which from the ruined roof  
 Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall;

Which careful Jove in nature's true behoof  
 Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?  
 Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall  
 Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some Goddess fled  
 Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?

## VIII

Or wert thou that just Maid who once before  
 Forsook the hated earth, oh! tell me sooth,  
 And camest again to visit us once more?  
 Or wert thou [Mercy], that sweet smiling Youth?  
 Or that crowned Matron, sage white-robed Truth?  
 Or any other of that heavenly brood  
 Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

## IX

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,  
 Who, having clad thyself in human weed,  
 To earth from thy prefixed seat didst post,  
 And after short abode fly back with speed,  
 As if to shew what creatures Heaven doth breed;  
 Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire  
 To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heaven aspire?

## X

But oh! why didst thou not stay here below  
 To bless us with thy heaven-loved innocence,  
 To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,  
 To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,  
 Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence,  
 To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart?  
 But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

## XI

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,  
 Her false-imagined loss cease to lament.  
 And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild;  
 Think what a present thou to God hast sent,  
 And render him with patience what he lent:



This if thou do, he will an offspring give  
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to  
live.

AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE,  
PART LATIN, PART ENGLISH

(1628)

*The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began:—*

HAIL, Native Language, that by sinews weak,  
Didst move my first-endeavouring tongue to speak,  
And madest imperfect words, with childish trips,  
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,  
Driving dumb Silence from the portal door,  
Where he had mutely sat two years before:  
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask,  
That now I use thee in my latter task:  
Small loss it is that thence can come unto thee,  
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee.  
Thou need'st not be ambitious to be first,  
Believe me, I have thither packed the worst:  
And, if it happen as I did forecast,  
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.  
I pray thee then deny me not thy aid,  
For this same small neglect that I have made;  
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,  
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chieftest treasure;  
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight  
Which takes our late fantastics with delight;  
But cull those richest robes and gayest attire,  
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.  
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,  
And loudly knock to have their passage out,  
And, weary of their place, do only stay  
Till thou hast decked them in thy best array;  
That so they may, without suspect or fears,  
Fly swiftly to this fair Assembly's ears.  
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,

Thy service in some graver subject use,  
 Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,  
 Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:  
 Such where the deep transported mind may soar  
 Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door  
 Look in, and see each blissful Deity  
 How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,  
 Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings  
 To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings  
 Immortal nectar to her kingly Sire;  
 Then, passing through the spheres of watchful fire,  
 And misty regions of wide air next under,  
 And hills of snow and lofts of piled thunder,  
 May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,  
 In heaven's defiance mustering all his waves;  
 Then sing of secret things that came to pass  
 When beldam Nature in her cradle was;  
 And last of Kings and Queens and Heroes old,  
 Such as the wise Demodocus once told  
 In solemn songs at king Alcinoüs' feast,  
 While sad Ulysses' soul and all the rest  
 Are held, with his melodious harmony,  
 In willing chains and sweet captivity.  
 But fie, my wandering Muse, how thou dost stray!  
 Expectance calls thee now another way.  
 Thou know'st it must be now thy only bent  
 To keep in compass of thy Predicament.  
 Then quick about thy purposed business come,  
 That to the next I may resign my room.

*Then ENS is represented as Father of the Predicaments, his ten Sons; whereof the eldest stood for SUBSTANCE with his Canons; which ENS, thus speaking, explains:—*

Good luck befriend thee, son; for at thy birth  
 The faery Ladies danced upon the hearth.  
 The drowsy Nurse hath sworn she did them spy  
 Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,  
 And, sweetly singing round about thy bed,  
 Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.  
 She heard them give thee this, that thou shouldst still

From eyes of mortals walk invisible.  
 Yet there is something that doth force my fear;  
 For once it was my dismal hap to hear  
 A Sibyl old, bow-bent with crooked age,  
 That far events full wisely could presage,  
 And, in Time's long and dark prospective-glass,  
 Foresaw what future days should bring to pass.  
 "Your Son," said she, "(nor can you it prevent,) Shall subject be to many an *Accident*.  
 O'er all his Brethren he shall reign as King;  
 Yet every one shall make him underling,  
 And those that cannot live from him asunder  
 Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.  
 In worth and excellence he shall outgo them;  
 Yet, being above them, he shall be below them.  
 From others he shall stand in need of nothing,  
 Yet on his Brothers shall depend for clothing.  
 To find a foe it shall not be his hap,  
 And peace shall lull him in her flowery lap;  
 Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door  
 Devouring war shall never cease to roar;  
 Yea, it shall be his natural property  
 To harbour those that are at enmity."  
 What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not  
 Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?

*The next, QUANTITY and QUALITY, spake in prose: then RELATICS  
 was called by his name.*

Rivers, arise: whether thou be the son  
 Of utmost Tweed, or Ouse, or gulfy Dun,  
 Or Trent, who, like some earth-born Giant, spreads  
 His thirty arms along the indented meads,  
 Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath,  
 Or Sevren swift, guilty of maiden's death,  
 Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lea,  
 Or coaly Tyne, or ancient hallowed Dee,  
 Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian's name,  
 Or Medway smooth, or royal-towered Thame.

*The rest was prose.*

## THE PASSION

(1630)

## I

EREWHILE of music, and ethereal mirth,  
 Wherewith the stage of Air and Earth did ring,  
 And joyous news of heavenly Infant's birth,  
 My muse with Angels did divide to sing;  
 But headlong joy is ever on the wing,  
     In wintry solstice like the shortened light  
 Soon swallowed up in dark and long outliving night.

## II

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,  
 And set my Harp to notes of saddest woe,  
 Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,  
 Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,  
 Which he for us did freely undergo:  
     Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight  
 Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight!

## III

He, sovran Priest, stooping his regal head,  
 That dropt with odorous oil down his fair eyes,  
 Poor fleshly Tabernacle enterèd,  
 His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies:  
 Oh, what a mask was there, what a disguise!  
     Yet more: the stroke of death he must abide;  
 Then lies him meekly down fast by his Brethren's  
     side.

## IV

These latest scenes confine my roving verse;  
 To this horizon is my Phœbus bound.  
 His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,  
 And former sufferings, elsewhere are found;  
 Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound:  
     Me softer airs befit, and softer strings  
 Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.



## V

Befriend me, Night, best Patroness of grief!  
 Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,  
 And work my flattered fancy to belief  
 That Heaven and Earth are coloured with my woe;  
 My sorrows are too dark for day to know:

The leaves should all be black whereon I write,  
 And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish  
 white.

## VI

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,  
 That whirled the prophet up at Chebar flood;  
 My spirit some transporting Cherub feels  
 To bear me where the Towers of Salem stood,  
 Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood.

There doth my soul in holy vision sit,  
 In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

## VII

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock  
 That was the casket of Heaven's richest store,  
 And here, though grief my feeble hands up-lock,  
 Yet on the softened quarry would I score  
 My plaining verse as lively as before;

For sure so well instructed are my tears  
 That they would fitly fall in ordered characters.

## VIII

Or, should I thence, hurried on viewless wing,  
 Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,  
 The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring  
 Would soon unbosom all their Echoes mild;  
 And I (for grief is easily beguiled)

Might think the infection of my sorrows loud  
 Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

*This Subject the Author finding to be above the years he had when, he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.*

## ON SHAKESPEARE

(1630)

WHAT needs my Shakespeare, for his honoured bones,  
 The labour of an age in pilèd stones?  
 Or that his hollowed relics should be hid  
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid?  
 Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame,  
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?  
 Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,  
 Hast built thyself a livelong monument.  
 For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,  
 Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart  
 Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,  
 Those Delphic lines with deep impression took;  
 Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,  
 Dost make us marble, with too much conceiving;  
 And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,  
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

## ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER

*Who sickened in the time of his Vacancy, being forbid to go to  
 London by reason of the Plague.*

(1631)

HERE lies old Hobson. Death hath broke his girt,  
 And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;  
 Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one  
 He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.  
 'T was such a shifter that, if truth were known,  
 Death was half glad when he had got him down;  
 For he had any time this ten years full  
 Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and *The Bull*.  
 And surely Death could never have prevailed,  
 Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;  
 But lately, finding him so long at home,  
 And thinking now his journey's end was come,  
 And that he had ta'en up his latest Inn,

In the kind office of a Chamberlin  
 Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,  
 Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.  
 If any ask for him, it shall be said,  
 "Hobson has supped, and 's newly gone to bed."

### ANOTHER ON THE SAME

HERE lieth one who did most truly prove  
 That he could never die while he could move;  
 So hung his destiny, never to rot  
 While he might still jog on and keep his trot;  
 Made of sphere-metal, never to decay  
 Until his revolution was at stay.  
 Time numbers Motion, yet (without a crime  
 'Gainst old truth) Motion numbered out his time;  
 And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,  
 His principles being ceased, he ended straight.  
 Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,  
 And too much breathing put him out of breath;  
 Nor were it contradiction to affirm  
 Too long vacation hastened on his term.  
 Merely to drive the time away he sickened,  
 Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.  
 "Nay," quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,  
 "If I may n't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched,  
 But vow, though the cross Doctors all stood hearers,  
 For one carrier put down to make six bearers."  
 Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,  
 He died for heaviness that his cart went light.  
 His leisure told him that his time was come,  
 And lack of load made his life burdensome,  
 That even to his last breath (there be that say 't),  
 As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight!"  
 But, had his doings lasted as they were,  
 He had been an immortal Carrier.  
 Obedient to the moon he spent his date  
 In course reciprocal, and had his fate  
 Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas;

Yet (strange to think) his wain was his increase.  
His letters are delivered all and gone;  
Only remains this superscription.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS  
OF WINCHESTER

THIS rich marble doth inter  
The honoured wife of Winchester,  
A viscount's daughter, an earl's heir,  
Besides what her virtues fair  
Added to her noble birth,  
More than she could own from earth.  
Summers three times eight save one  
She had told; alas! too soon,  
After so short time of breath,  
To house with darkness and with death!  
Yet, had the number of her days  
Been as complete as was her praise,  
Nature and Fate had had no strife  
In giving limit to her life.  
Her high birth and her graces sweet  
Quickly found a lover meet;  
The virgin quire for her request  
The god that sits at marriage-feast;  
He at their invoking came,  
But with a scarce well-lighted flame;  
And in his garland, as he stood,  
Ye might discern a cypress-bud.  
Once had the early Matrons run  
To greet her of a lovely son,  
And now with second hope she goes,  
And calls Lucina to her throes;  
But, whether by mischance or blame,  
Atropos for Lucina came,  
And with remorseless cruelty  
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree.  
The hapless babe before his birth  
Had burial, yet not laid in earth;

And the languished mother's womb  
 Was not long a living tomb.  
 So have I seen some tender slip,  
 Saved with care from Winter's nip,  
 The pride of her carnation train,  
 Plucked up by some unheedy swain,  
 Who only thought to crop the flower  
 New shot up from vernal shower;  
 But the fair blossom hangs the head  
 Sideways, as on a dying bed,  
 And those pearls of dew she wears  
 Prove to be presaging tears  
 Which the sad morn had let fall  
 On her hastening funeral.  
 Gentle Lady, may thy grave  
 Peace and quiet ever have!  
 After this thy travail sore,  
 Sweet rest seize thee evermore,  
 That, to give the world encrease,  
 Shortened hast thy own life's lease!  
 Here, besides the sorrowing  
 That thy noble House doth bring,  
 Here be tears of perfect moan  
 Wept for thee in Helicon;  
 And some flowers and some bays  
 For thy hearse, to strew the ways,  
 Sent thee from the banks of Came,  
 Devoted to thy virtuous name;  
 Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt'st in glory,  
 Next her, much like to thee in story,  
 That fair Syrian Shepherdess,  
 Who, after years of barrenness,  
 The highly-favoured Joseph bore  
 To him that served for her before,  
 And at her next birth, much like thee,  
 Through pangs fled to felicity,  
 Far within the bosom bright  
 Of blazing Majesty and Light:  
 There with thee, new-welcome Saint,  
 Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,



With thee there clad in radiant sheen,  
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE  
AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

(1631)

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
That I to manhood am arrived so near;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.  
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven,  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

# POEMS WRITTEN AT HORTON

1632-1638

L'ALLEGRO

(1633)

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,  
In Stygian cave forlorn  
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights  
unholy,  
Find out some uncouth cell,  
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous  
wings,  
And the night-raven sings;  
There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,  
As ragged as thy locks,  
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.  
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,  
In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,  
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,  
Whom lovely Venus at a birth  
With two sister Graces more  
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;  
Or whether (as some sager sing)  
The frolic Wind that breathes the spring,  
Zephyr with Aurora playing,  
As he met her once a-Maying,  
There on beds of violets blue,  
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,  
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,  
So buxom, blithe and debonair.  
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee  
Jest and youthful Jollity,

Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,  
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek;  
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides.  
Come, and trip it as ye go,  
On the light fantastic toe;  
And in thy right hand lead with thee  
The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;  
And, if I give thee honour due,  
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,  
To live with her, and live with thee,  
In unprovèd pleasures free;  
To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;  
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,  
And at my window bid good-morrow,  
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,  
Or the twisted eglantine;  
While the cock with lively din  
Scatters the rear of Darkness thin;  
And to the stack, or the barn-door,  
Stoutly struts his dames before:  
Oft listening how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill,  
Through the high wood echoing shrill:  
Sometime walking, not unseen,  
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate,  
Where the great Sun begins his state,  
Robed in flames and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;  
While the ploughman, near at hand,  
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the mower whets his scythe,

And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,  
Whilst the lantskip round it measures:  
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The labouring clouds do often rest;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied;  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Bosomed high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some Beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.  
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes  
From betwixt two aged oaks,  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met  
Are at their savoury dinner set  
Of hearbs and other country messes,  
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;  
And then in haste her bower she leaves,  
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;  
Or, if the earlier season lead,  
To the tanned haycock in the mead.

Sometimes with secure delight  
The upland hamlets will invite,  
When the merry bells ring round,  
And the jocond rebecks sound  
To many a youth and many a maid  
Dancing in the chequered shade;  
And young and old come forth to play  
On a sunshine holyday,  
Till the livelong daylight fail:  
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,  
With stories told of many a feat,  
How fairy Mab the junkets eat:  
She was pinched and pulled, she said;  
And he, by Friar's lanthorn led,  
Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat  
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,  
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn  
That ten day-labourers could not end;  
Then lies him down, the lubbar fend,  
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,  
And crop-full out of doors he flings,  
Ere the first cock his matin rings.  
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,  
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.  
Towered cities please us then,  
And the busy hum of men,  
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,  
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,  
With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit or arms, while both contend  
To win her grace whom all commend.  
There let Hymen oft appear  
In saffron robe, with taper clear,  
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
With mask and antique pageantry;  
Such sights as youthful Poets dream  
On summer eves by haunted stream.  
Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
If Jonson's learned sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild.  
And ever, against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse,  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,  
In notes with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out  
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony;  
That Orpheus' self may heave his head  
From golden slumber on a bed

Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear  
Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto to have quite set free  
His half-regained Eurydice,  
These delights if thou canst give,  
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

## IL PENSEROSO

(1633)

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,  
The brood of Folly without father bred!  
How little you bested,  
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!  
Dwell in some idle brain,  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,  
Or likest hovering dreams,  
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.  
But hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!  
Hail, divinest Melancholy!  
Whose saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the sense of human sight,  
And therefore to our weaker view  
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;  
Black, but such as in esteem  
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,  
Or that starred Ethiop Queen that strove  
To set her beauty's praise above  
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.  
Yet thou art higher far descended:  
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore  
To solitary Saturn bore;  
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign  
Such mixture was not held a stain.  
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades  
He met her, and in secret shades  
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,



Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.  
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestic train,  
And sable stole of cypress lawn  
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
Come; but keep thy wonted state,  
With even step, and musing gait,  
And looks commercing with the skies,  
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:  
There, held in holy passion still,  
Forget thyself to marble, till  
With a sad leaden downward cast  
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.  
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,  
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
And hears the Muses in a ring  
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;  
And add to these retirèd Leisure,  
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;  
But, first and chieftest, with thee bring  
Him that yon soars on golden wing,  
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,  
The Cherub Contemplation;  
And the mute Silence hist along,  
'Less Philomel will deign a song,  
In her sweetest saddest plight,  
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,  
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke  
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.  
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
Most musical, most melancholy!  
Thee, Chauntress, oft the woods among  
I woo, to hear thy even-song;  
And, missing thee, I walk unseen  
On the dry smooth-shaven green,  
To behold the wandering Moon,  
Riding near her highest noon,  
Like one that had been led astray

Through the heaven's wide pathless way,  
And oft, as if her head she bowed,  
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.  
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,  
I hear the far-off curfew sound,  
Over some wide-watered shore,  
Swinging slow with sullen roar;  
Or, if the air will not permit,  
Some still removèd place will fit,  
Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the hearth,  
Or the Bellman's drowsy charm  
To bless the doors from nightly harm.  
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,  
Be seen in some high lonely tower,  
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,  
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere  
The spirit of Plato, to unfold  
What worlds or what vast regions hold  
The immortal mind that hath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;  
And of those Dæmons that are found  
In fire, air, flood, or underground,  
Whose power hath a true consent  
With planet or with element.  
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy  
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,  
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops' line,  
Or the tale of Troy divine,  
Or what (though rare) of later age  
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.  
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power  
Might raise Musæus from his bower;  
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing  
Such notes as, warbled to the string,  
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
And made Hell grant what Love did seek;  
Or call up him that left half-told

The story of Cambuscan bold,  
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,  
And who had Canace to wife,  
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,  
And of the wondrous horse of brass  
On which the Tartar King did ride;  
And if aught else great Bards beside  
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,  
Of forests, and enchantments drear,  
Where more is meant than meets the ear.  
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,  
Till civil-suited Morn appear,  
Not tricked and frownced, as she wont  
With the Attic boy to hunt,  
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,  
While rocking winds are piping loud,  
Or ushered with a shower still,  
When the gust hath blown his fill,  
Ending on the rustling leaves,  
With minute drops from off the eaves.  
And, when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring  
To archèd walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,  
Of pine, or monumental oak,  
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke  
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.  
There, in close covert, by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from Day's garish eye,  
While the bee with honeyed thigh,  
That at her flowery work doth sing,  
And the waters murmuring,  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.  
And let some strange mysterious dream,  
Wave at his wings in airy stream,  
Of lively portraiture displayed,

Softly on my eyelids laid.  
And as I wake, sweet music breathe  
Above, about, or underneath,  
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,  
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.  
But let my due feet never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowèd roof,  
With antick pillars massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light.  
There let the pealing organ blow,  
To the full voiced Quire below,  
In service high and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.  
And may at last my weary age  
Find out the peaceful hermitage,  
The hairy gown and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell,  
Of every star that Heaven doth shew,  
And every hearb that sips the dew;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.  
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,  
And I with thee will choose to live.

## SONNET TO THE NIGHTINGALE

(1632-33)

O NIGHTINGALE that on yon blooming spray  
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,  
Thou with fresh hopes the Lover's heart dost fill,  
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.  
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of Day,  
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,  
Portend success in love. O if Jove's will  
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,

Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate  
 Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;  
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late  
 For my relief, yet had'st no reason why.  
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,  
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

### SONG ON MAY MORNING

(1632-33)

Now the bright morning-star, Day's harbinger,  
 Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her  
 The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
 The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.  
     Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire  
     Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!  
     Woods and groves are of thy dressing;  
     Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.  
 Thus we salute thee with our early song,  
 And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

### ON TIME

(1633-34)

FLY, envious Time, till thou run out thy race:  
 Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,  
 Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;  
 And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,  
 Which is no more than what is false and vain,  
 And merely mortal dross;  
 So little is our loss,  
 So little is thy gain!  
 For, whenas each thing bad thou hast entombed,  
 And, last of all, thy greedy Self consumed,  
 Then long eternity shall greet our bliss  
 With an individual kiss,  
 And joy shall overtake us as a flood;  
 When everything that is sincerely good

And perfectly divine,  
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine  
About the supreme Throne  
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone  
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,  
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,  
Attired with stars we shall forever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee,  
O Time!

## AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

(1633-34)

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,  
Sphere-born harmonious Sisters, Voice and Verse,  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,  
Dead things with imbreathed sense able to pierce;  
And to our high-raised phantasy present  
That undisturbèd Song of pure consent,  
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured Throne  
To Him that sits thereon,  
With saintly shout and solemn jubily;  
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row  
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow,  
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,  
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,  
Hymns devout and holy psalms  
Singing everlastingly:  
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,  
May rightly answer that melodious noise;  
As once we did, till disproportioned Sin  
Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din  
Broke the fair music that all creatures made  
To their great Lord, whose love their motions swayed  
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood  
In first obedience, and their state of good.  
O, may we soon again renew that song,  
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long



To his celestial consort us unite,  
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!

## UPON THE CIRCUMCISION

(1634)

YE flaming Powers, and wingèd Warriors bright,  
That erst with music, and triumphant song,  
First heard by happy watchful Shepherds' ear,  
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along,  
Through the soft silence of the listening night,—  
Now mourn; and if sad share with us to bear  
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,  
Burn in your sighs, and borrow  
Seas wept from our deep sorrow,  
He who with all Heaven's heraldry whilere  
Entered the world, now bleeds to give us ease.  
Alas! how soon our sin  
Sore doth begin  
His infancy to seize!  
O more exceeding Love, or Law more just?  
Just Law indeed, but more exceeding Love!  
For we, by rightful doom remediless,  
Were lost in death, till He, that dwelt above  
High-throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust  
Emptied his glory, even to nakedness;  
And that great Covenant which we still transgress  
Intirely satisfied,  
And the full wrath beside  
Of vengeful Justice bore for our excess,  
And seals obedience first with wounding smart  
This day; but oh! ere long,  
Huge pangs and strong  
Will pierce more near his heart.

## ARCADES

(1633)

*Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:*

## I. SONG

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!  
 What sudden blaze of majesty  
 Is that which we from hence descry,  
 Too divine to be mistook?

This, this is she  
 To whom our vows and wishes bend:  
 Here our solemn search hath end.  
 Fame, that her high worth to raise  
 Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,  
 We may justly now accuse  
 Of detraction from her praise:  
 Less than half we find expressed;  
 Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,  
 In circle round her shining throne  
 Shooting her beams like silver threads:  
 This, this is she alone,  
 Sitting like a Goddess bright  
 In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,  
 Or the towered Cybele,  
 Mother of a hundred gods?  
 Juno dares not give her odds:  
 Who had thought this clime had held  
 A deity so unparalleled?

*As they come forward, the GENIUS OF THE WOOD appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

*Gen.* Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this  
 disguise,

I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;  
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung  
Of that renownèd flood so often sung,  
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,  
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;  
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,  
Fair silver-buskin'd Nymphs, as great and good.  
I know this quest of yours and free intent  
Was all in honour and devotion meant  
To the great Mistress of yon princely shrine,  
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,  
And with all helpful service will comply  
To further this night's glad solemnity,  
And lead ye where ye may more near behold  
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;  
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,  
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.  
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power  
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,  
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove  
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;  
And all my plants I save from nightly ill  
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;  
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,  
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,  
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,  
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.  
When Evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round  
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;  
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn  
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tassell'd horn  
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,  
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout  
With puissant words and murmurs made to bless.  
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness  
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I  
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,  
That sit upon the nine enfolded spheres,  
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,  
And turn the adamantine spindle round

On which the fate of gods and men is wound.  
 Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,  
 To lull the daughters of Necessity,  
 And keep unsteady Nature to her law,  
 And the low world in measured motion draw  
 After the heavenly tune, which none can hear  
 Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.  
 And yet such music worthiest were to blaze  
 The peerless height of her immortal praise  
 Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,  
 If my inferior hand or voice could hit  
 Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,  
 Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show  
 I will assay, her worth to celebrate,  
 And so attend ye toward her glittering state;  
 Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,  
 Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

## II. SONG

O'er the smooth enamelled green,  
 Where no print of step hath been,  
     Follow me, as I sing  
     And touch the warbled string:  
 Under the shady roof  
 Of branching elm star-proof  
     Follow me.  
 I will bring you where she sits,  
 Clad in splendour as befits  
     Her deity.  
 Such a rural Queen  
 'All Arcadia hath not seen.

## III. SONG

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more  
 By sandy Ladon's liliated banks;  
 On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,  
 Trip no more in twilight ranks;  
 Though Erymanth your loss deplore,  
 A better soil shall give ye thanks.  
 From the stony Mænalus

Bring your flocks, and live with us;  
 Here ye shall have greater grace,  
 To serve the Lady of this place.  
 Through Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,  
 Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.  
     Such a rural Queen  
     All Arcadia hath not seen.

## COMUS, A MASK

## THE PERSONS

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.  
     COMUS, with his Crew.

THE LADY.      FIRST BROTHER.      SECOND BROTHER.  
     SABRINA, the Nymph.

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, BEFORE THE EARL OF  
 BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES

The Chief Persons which presented were:—

The Lord Brackley;      Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;  
     The Lady Alice Egerton.

*The first Scene discovers a wild wood.*

*The ATTENDANT SPIRIT descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court  
 My mansion is, where those immortal shapes  
 Of bright aerial Spirits live insphered  
 In regions mild of calm and serene air,  
 Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot  
 Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,  
 Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,  
 Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,  
 Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,  
 After this mortal change, to her true servants  
 Amongst the enthronèd gods on sainted seats.  
 Yet some there be that by due steps aspire  
 To lay their just hands on that golden key  
 That opes the Palace of Eternity.  
 To such my errand is; and, but for such,  
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds  
 With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway  
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,  
Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,  
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt Isles  
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay  
The unadornèd bosom of the Deep;  
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,  
By course commits to several government,  
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns  
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,  
The greatest and the best of all the main,  
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;  
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun  
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power  
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide  
An old and haughty Nation, proud in arms:  
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,  
Are coming to attend their father's state,  
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way  
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,  
The nodding horror of whose shady brows  
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;  
And here their tender age might suffer peril,  
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,  
I was despatched for their defence and guard!  
And listen why; for I will tell you now  
What never yet was heard in tale or song,  
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape  
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,  
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,  
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,  
On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,  
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup  
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)  
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,  
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,  
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a Son  
Much like his father, but his mother more,



Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:  
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,  
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,  
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,  
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,  
Excels his mother at her mighty art;  
Offering to every weary traveller  
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,  
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste  
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),  
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,  
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed  
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,  
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat  
All other parts remaining as they were.  
And they, so perfect is their misery,  
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,  
But boast themselves more comely than before,  
And all their friends and native home forget,  
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.  
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove  
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,  
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star  
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,  
As now I do. But first I must put off  
These my sky-robcs, spun out of Iris' woof,  
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain  
That to the service of this house belongs,  
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,  
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,  
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,  
And in this office of his mountain watch  
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid  
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread  
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

*COMUS enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of Monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

*Comus.* The star that bids the shepherd fold  
Now the top of heaven doth hold;  
And the gilded car of Day  
His glowing axle doth allay  
In the steep Atlantic stream:  
And the slope Sun his upward beam  
Shoots against the dusky pole,  
Pacing toward the other goal  
Of his chamber in the east.  
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,  
Midnight shout and revelry,  
Tipsy dance and jollity.  
Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
Rigour now is gone to bed;  
And Advice with scrupulous head,  
Strict Age, and sour Severity,  
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.  
We, that are of purer fire,  
Imitate the starry Quire,  
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,  
Lead in swift round the months and years.  
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,  
Now to the Moon in wavering morrice move;  
And on the tawny sands and shelves  
Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves.  
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,  
The Wood-Nymphs, decked with daisies trim,  
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:  
What hath night to do with sleep?  
Night hath better sweets to prove;  
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.  
Come, let us our rites begin;  
'T is only daylight that makes sin,  
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.  
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,  
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame  
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious Dame,  
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb  
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,

And makes one blot of all the air!  
 Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,  
 Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend  
 Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end  
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out  
 Ere the blabbing eastern scout,  
 The nice Morn on the Indian steep,  
 From her cabined loop-hole peep,  
 And to the tell-tale Sun descry  
 Our concealed solemnity.  
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground  
 In a light fantastic round.

*The Measure.*

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace  
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.  
 Run to your shrouds within these brakes and  
     trees;  
 Our number may affright. Some virgin sure  
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)  
 Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,  
 And to my wily trains: I shall ere long  
 Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed  
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl  
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air,  
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,  
 And give it false presentments, lest the place  
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,  
 And put the Damsel to suspicious flight;  
 Which must not be, for that's against my course.  
 I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
 And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,  
 Baited with reasons not unplauble,  
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye  
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust  
 I shall appear some harmless villager,  
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.  
 But here she comes; I fairly step aside,  
 And hearken, if I may her business hear.

*The LADY enters*

*Lady.* This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound  
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,  
Such as the jocond flute or gamesome pipe  
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,  
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,  
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,  
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth  
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence  
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else  
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet  
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?  
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out  
With this long way, resolving here to lodge  
Under the spreading favour of these pines,  
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side  
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit  
As the kind hospitable woods provide.  
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,  
Like a sad Votarist in palmer's weed,  
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.  
But where they are, and why they came not back,  
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'T is likeliest  
They had ingaged their wandering steps too far;  
And envious darkness, ere they could return,  
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,  
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars  
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely traveller?  
This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth  
Was rife, and perfet in my listening ear;  
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.  
What might this be? A thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory,  
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,

And airy tongues that syllable men's names  
 On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.  
 These thoughts may startle well, but not astound  
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
 By a strong siding champion, Conscience.  
 O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,  
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,  
 And thou unblemished form of Chastity!  
 I see ye visibly, and now believe  
 That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill  
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
 Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,  
 To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . .  
 Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud  
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
 I did not err: there does a sable cloud  
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.  
 I cannot hallo to my brothers, but  
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest  
 I'll venter; for my new-enlivened spirits  
 Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

## SONG

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen  
 Within thy airy shell  
 By slow Meander's margent green,  
 And in the violet-imbroidered vale  
 Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?  
 O if thou have  
 Hid them in some flowery cave,  
 Tell me but where,  
 Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!  
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,  
 And give resounding grace to all Heaven's  
 harmonies!

*Comus.* Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould  
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?  
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
To testify his hidden residence.

How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,  
At every fall smoothing the raven down  
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard  
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,  
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,  
Culling their potent hearbs and baleful drugs,  
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,  
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,  
And chid her barking waves into attention,  
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.  
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,  
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;  
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,  
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,  
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,  
And she shall be my Queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!  
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,  
Unless the Goddess that in rural shrine  
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song  
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog  
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

*Lady.* Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise  
That is addressed to unattending ears.  
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift  
How to regain my severed company,  
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo  
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

*Comus.* What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you  
thus?

*Lady.* Dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth.

*Comus.* Could that divide you from near-ushering  
guides?

*Lady.* They left me weary on a grassy turf.

*Comus.* By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?



*Lady.* To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

*Comus.* And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

*Lady.* They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

*Comus.* Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

*Lady.* How easy my misfortune is to hit!

*Comus.* Imports their loss, beside the present need?

*Lady.* No less than if I should my brothers lose.

*Comus.* Where they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

*Lady.* As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.

*Comus.* Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox  
In his loose traces from the furrow came,  
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.  
I saw them under a green mantling vine,  
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,  
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;  
Their port was more than human, as they stood.  
I took it for a faery vision  
Of some gay creatures of the element,  
That in the colours of the rainbow live,  
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,  
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,  
It were a journey like the path to Heaven  
To help you find them.

*Lady.* Gentle villager,  
What readiest way would bring me to that place?

*Comus.* Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

*Lady.* To find out that, good Shepherd, I suppose,  
In such a scant allowance of star-light,  
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,  
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.

*Comus.* I know each lane, and every alley green,  
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,  
And every bosky bourn from side to side,  
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;  
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,  
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know  
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark  
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,

I can conduct you, Lady, to a low  
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe  
Till further quest.

*Lady.* Shepherd, I take thy word,  
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,  
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,  
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls  
And courts of princes, where it first was named,  
And yet is most pretended. In a place  
Less warranted than this, or less secure,  
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.  
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial  
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead  
on. . . .

*The Two BROTHERS.*

*Eld. Bro.* Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou,  
fair Moon,  
That won'tst to love the travail's benison,  
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,  
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here  
In double night of darkness and of shades;  
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up  
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,  
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole  
Of some clay habitation, visit us  
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,  
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,  
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

*Sec. Bro.* Or, if our eyes  
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear  
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,  
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,  
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock  
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,  
'T would be some solace yet, some little cheering,  
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.  
But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!  
Where may she wander now, whither betake her  
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?

Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,  
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm  
 Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.  
 What if in wild amazement and affright,  
 Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp  
 Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!

*Eld. Bro.* Peace, brother: be not overexquisite  
 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;  
 For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,  
 What need a man forestall his date of grief,  
 And run to meet what he would most avoid?  
 Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,  
 How bitter is such self-delusion!  
 I do not think my sister so to seek,  
 Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,  
 And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,  
 As that the single want of light and noise  
 (Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)  
 Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,  
 And put them into misbecoming plight.  
 Virtue could see to do what Virtue would  
 By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
 Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self  
 Oft seeks to sweet retirèd solitude,  
 Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,  
 She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,  
 That, in the various bustle of resort,  
 Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.  
 He that has light within his own clear breast  
 May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:  
 But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts  
 Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
 Himself is his own dungeon.

*Sec. Bro.* 'T is most true  
 That musing Meditation most affects  
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,  
 Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,  
 And sits as safe as in a senate-house;  
 For who would rob a Hermit of his weeds,  
 His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,

Or do his grey hairs any violence?  
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian Tree  
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye  
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,  
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.  
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps  
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,  
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope  
Danger will wink on Opportunity,  
And let a single helpless maiden pass  
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.  
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;  
I fear the dread events that dog them both,  
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person  
Of our unownèd sister.

*Eld. Bro.* I do not, brother,  
Infer as if I thought my sister's state  
Secure without all doubt or controversy;  
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear  
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is  
That I encline to hope rather than fear,  
And gladly banish squint suspicion.  
My sister is not so defenceless left  
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,  
Which you remember not.

*Sec. Bro.* What hidden strength,  
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

*Eld. Bro.* I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,  
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own:  
'T is Chastity, my brother, Chastity:  
She that has that is clad in com'plete steel,  
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,  
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,  
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;  
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,  
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,  
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.  
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,  
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,

She may pass on with unblenched majesty,  
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.  
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,  
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,  
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaïd ghost,  
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,  
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,  
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.  
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call  
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece  
To testify the arms of Chastity?  
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,  
Fair silver-shafted Queen for ever chaste,  
Wherewith she tamed the brindled lioness  
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought  
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men  
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the  
woods.

What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield  
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,  
Wherewith she freezed her foes to con'gealed stone,  
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,  
And noble grace that dashed brute violence  
With sudden adoration and blank awe?  
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity  
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,  
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,  
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,  
And in clear dream and solemn vision  
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;  
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants  
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,  
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,  
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,  
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,  
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,  
The soul grows clotted by contagion,  
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose

The divine property of her first being.  
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp  
 Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,  
 Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,  
 As loth to leave the body that it loved,  
 And linked itself by carnal sensuality  
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

*Sec. Bro.* How charming is divine Philosophy!  
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
 And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,  
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.

*Eld. Bro.* List! list! I hear  
 Some far-off hallo break the silent air.

*Sec. Bro.* Methought so too; what should it be?

*Eld. Bro.* For certain,  
 Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,  
 Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,  
 Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

*Sec. Bro.* Heaven keep my sister!

Again, again, and near!

Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

*Eld. Bro.* I'll hallo.  
 If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,  
 Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

*The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.  
 Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.

*Spir.* What voice is that? my young Lord? speak  
 again.

*Sec. Bro.* O brother, 't is my father's Shepherd,  
 sure.

*Eld. Bro.* Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft  
 delayed

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,  
 And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.  
 How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram  
 Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,  
 Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?



How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?

*Spir.* O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,  
I came not here on such a trivial toy  
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth  
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth  
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought  
To this my errand, and the care it brought.  
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?  
How chance she is not in your company?

*Eld. Bro.* To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without  
blame

Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

*Spir.* Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

*Eld. Bro.* What fears, good Thyrsis?

Prithee briefly shew.

*Spir.* I'll tell ye. 'T is not vain or fabulous  
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)  
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,  
Storied of old in high immortal verse  
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted Isles,  
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;  
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood,  
Immured in cypress shades, a Sorcerer dwells,  
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,  
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,  
And here to every thirsty wanderer  
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,  
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison  
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,  
And the inglorious likeness of a beast  
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage  
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt  
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts  
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night  
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl  
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,  
Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecate  
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.  
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells

To inveigle and invite the unwary sense  
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.  
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks  
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb  
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,  
I sat me down to watch upon a bank  
With ivy canopied, and interwove  
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,  
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,  
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,  
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close  
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,  
'And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;  
At which I ceased, and listened them a while,  
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence  
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds  
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.  
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound  
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,  
And stole upon the air, that even Silence  
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might  
Deny her nature, and be never more,  
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,  
And took in strains that might create a soul  
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long  
To well I did perceive it was the voice  
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.  
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;  
And "O poor hapless Nightingale," thought I,  
"How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!"  
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,  
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,  
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place  
Where that damned wisard, hid in sly disguise  
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met  
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,  
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;  
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,  
Supposing him some neighbour villager.  
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed

Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung  
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here;  
 But further know I not.

*Sec. Bro.* O night and shades,  
 How are ye joined with hell in triple knot  
 Against the unarmèd weakness of one virgin,  
 Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence  
 You gave me, brother?

*Eld. Bro.* Yes, and keep it still;  
 Lean on it safely; not a period  
 Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats  
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power  
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:  
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,  
 Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;  
 Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm  
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.  
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last,  
 Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,  
 It shall be in eternal restless change  
 Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,  
 The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!  
 Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven  
 May never this just sword be lifted up;  
 But, for that damned magician, let him be girt  
 With all the griesly legions that troop  
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,  
 Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms  
 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,  
 And force him to restore his purchase back,  
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,  
 Cursed as his life.

*Spir.* Alas! good ventrous youth,  
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;  
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead.  
 Far other arms and other weapons must  
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.  
 He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints

And crumble all thy sinews.

*Eld. Bro.*

Why, prithee Shepherd,

How durst thou then thyself approach so near

As to make this relation?

*Spir.*

Care and utmost shifts

How to secure the Lady from surprisal

Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,

Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled

In every virtuous plant and healing hearb

That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.

He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;

Which when I did, he on the tender grass

Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,

And in requital ope his leathern scrip,

And shew me simples of a thousand names,

Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.

Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,

But of divine effect, he culled me out.

The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,

But in another country, as he said,

Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:

Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain

Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;

And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly

That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.

He called it Hæmony, and gave it me,

And bade me keep it as of sovran use

'Gainst all inchantments, mildew blast, or damp,

Or ghastly Furies' apparition.

I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,

Till now that this extremity compelled.

But now I find it true; for by this means

I knew the foul inchanter, though disguised,

Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,

And yet came off. If you have this about you

(As I will give you when we go) you may

Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;

Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood

And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,

And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;

But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew  
Fierce sign of battail make, and menace high,  
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,  
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

*Eld. Bro.* Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;  
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

*The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair; to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

*Comus.* Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,  
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,  
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,  
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

*Lady.* Fool, do not boast.  
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind  
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind  
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.

*Comus.* Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?

Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates  
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures  
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,  
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns  
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.  
And first behold this cordial julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,  
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.  
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone  
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena  
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.  
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,  
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent  
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?  
But you invert the covenants of her trust,  
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,  
With that which you received on other terms,  
Scorning the unexempt condition

By which all mortal frailty must subsist,  
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,  
That have been tired all day without repast,  
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,  
This will restore all soon.

*Lady.* 'T will not, false traitor!  
'T will not restore the truth and honesty  
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.  
Was this the cottage and the safe abode  
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects' are these,  
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!  
Hence with thy brewed inchantments, foul deceiver!  
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence  
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?  
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here  
With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?  
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,  
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None  
But such as are good men can give good things;  
And that which is not good is not delicious  
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

*Comus.* O foolishness of men! that lend their ears  
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,  
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,  
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence  
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth  
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,  
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,  
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,  
But all to please and sate the curious taste?  
And set to work millions of spinning worms,  
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,  
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might  
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins  
She hatched the all-worshiped ore and precious gems,  
To store her children with. If all the world  
Should in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,  
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,  
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,  
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;

And we should serve him as a grudging master,  
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,  
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,  
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,  
And strangled with her waste fertility:  
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with  
plumes;  
The herds would over-multitude their lords;  
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought  
diamonds

Would so emblaze the forehead of the Deep,  
And so bestud with stars, that they below  
Would grow inured to light, and come at last  
To gaze upon the Sun with shameless brows.  
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened  
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.  
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,  
But must be current; and the good thereof  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unsavoury in the injoyment of itself.  
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose  
It withers on the stalk with languished head.  
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown  
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,  
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.  
It is for homely features to keep home;  
They had their name thence: coarse complexions  
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply  
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.  
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,  
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the Morn?  
There was another meaning in these gifts;  
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.

*Lady.* I had not thought to have unlocked my lips  
In this unhallowed air, but that this Juggler  
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,  
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.  
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments  
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.  
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,



As if she would her children should be riotous  
With her abundance. She, good Cateress,  
Means her provision only to the good,  
That live according to her sober laws,  
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.  
If every just man that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and be seeming share  
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury  
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed  
In unsuperfluous even proportion,  
And she no whit encumbered with her store;  
And then the Giver would be better thanked,  
His praise due paid: for swinish Gluttony  
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,  
But with besotted base ingratitude  
Crams and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?  
Or have I said enow? To him that dares  
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words  
Against the sun-clad power of Chastity  
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?  
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend  
The sublime notion and high mystery  
That must be uttered to unfold the sage  
And serious doctrine of Virginitie;  
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know  
More happiness than this thy present lot.  
Enjoy your dear Wit, and gay Rhetoric,  
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;  
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.  
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth  
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits  
To such a flame of sacred vehemence  
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,  
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,  
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,  
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

*Comus.* She fables not. I feel that I do fear  
Her words set off by some superior power;  
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew

Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove  
 Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus  
 To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,  
 And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more!  
 This is mere moral babble, and direct  
 Against the canon laws of our foundation.  
 I must not suffer this; yet 't is but the lees  
 And settlings of a melancholy blood.  
 But this will cure all straight; one sip of this  
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight  
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . .

*The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in.*

*Spir.* What! have you let the false Enchanter scape?  
 O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,  
 And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,  
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,  
 We cannot free the Lady that sits here  
 In stony fetters fixed and motionless.  
 Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,  
 Some other means I have which may be used,  
 Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,  
 The soothest Shepherd that ere piped on plains.

There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,  
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:  
 Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;  
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,  
 That had the sceptre from his father Brute.  
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit  
 Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,  
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood  
 That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.  
 The water-Nymphs, that in the bottom played,  
 Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,  
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;  
 Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,  
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe

In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,  
And through the porch and inlet of each sense  
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,  
And underwent a quick immortal change,  
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains  
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve  
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,  
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs  
That the shrewd meddling Elf delights to make,  
Which she with pretious vial'd liquors heals:  
For which the Shepherds, at their festivals,  
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,  
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream,  
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffadils.  
And, as the old Swain said, she can unlock  
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,  
If she be right invoked in warbled song;  
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift  
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,  
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,  
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

## SONG

Sabrina fair,  
Listen where thou art sitting  
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,  
In twisted braids of lilies knitting  
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;  
Listen for dear honour's sake,  
Goddess of the silver lake,  
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,  
In name of great Oceanus,  
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,  
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;  
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,  
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;  
By scaly Triton's winding shell,  
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;

By Leucothea's lovely hands,  
 And her son that rules the strands;  
 By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,  
 And the songs of Sirens sweet;  
 By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,  
 And fair Ligea's golden comb,  
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks  
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks;  
 By all the nymphs that nightly dance  
 Upon thy streams with wily glance;  
 Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head  
 From thy coral-paven bed,  
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,  
 Till thou our summons answered have.

Listen and save!

*SABRINA rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringed bank,  
 Where grows the willow and the oiser dank,  
 My sliding chariot stays,  
 Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen  
 Of turkis blue, and emerald green,  
 That in the channel strays:  
 Whilst from off the waters fleet  
 Thus I set my printless feet  
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,  
 That bends not as I tread.  
 Gentle swain, at thy request  
 I am here!

*Spir.* Goddess dear,  
 We implore thy powerful hand  
 To undo the charmed band  
 Of true virgin here distressed  
 Through the force and through the wile  
 Of unblessed enchanter vile.

*Sabr.* Shepherd, 't is my office best  
 To help insnarèd Chastity.  
 Brightest Lady, look on me.  
 Thus I sprinkle on thy breast

Drops that from my fountain pure  
I have kept of pretious cure;  
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,  
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:  
Next this marble venom'd seat,  
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,  
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.  
Now the spell hath lost his hold;  
And I must haste ere morning hour  
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

*SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.*

*Spir.* Virgin, daughter of Locrine,  
Sprung of old Anchises' line,  
May thy brimmèd waves for this  
Their full tribute never miss  
From a thousand petty rills,  
That tumble down the snowy hills:  
Summer drouth or singèd air  
Never scorch thy tresses fair,  
Nor wet October's torrent flood  
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;  
May thy billows roll ashore  
The beryl and the golden ore;  
May thy lofty head be crowned  
With many a tower and terrace round,  
And here and there thy banks upon  
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,  
Let us fly this cursed place,  
Lest the Sorcerer us entice  
With some other new device.  
Not a waste or needless sound  
Till we come to holier ground.  
I shall be your faithful guide  
Through this gloomy covert wide;  
And not many furlongs thence  
Is your Father's residence,  
Where this night are met in state  
Many a friend to gratulate

His wished presence, and beside  
 All the Swains that there abide  
 With jigs and rural dance resort.  
 We shall catch them at their sport,  
 And our sudden coming there  
 Will double all their mirth and cheer.  
 Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,  
 But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

*The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the two BROTHERS and the LADY.*

## SONG

*Spir.* Back, Shepherds, back! Enough your play  
 Till next sun-shine holiday.  
 Here be, without duck or nod,  
 Other trippings to be trod  
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise  
 As Mercury did first devise  
 With the mincing Dryades  
 On the lawns and on the leas.

*This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.*

Noble Lord and Lady bright,  
 I have brought ye new delight.  
 Here behold so goodly grown  
 Three fair branches of your own.  
 Heaven hath timely tried their youth,  
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,  
 And sent them here through hard assays  
 With a crown of deathless praise,  
 To triumph in victorious dance  
 O'er sensual Folly and Intemperance.

*The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes.*

*Spir.* To the ocean now I fly,  
 And those happy climes that lie  
 Where day never shuts his eye,  
 Up in the broad fields of the sky.

There I suck the liquid air,  
All amidst the Gardens fair  
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three  
That sing about the Golden Tree.  
Along the crispèd shades and bowers  
Revels the spruce and jocond Spring;  
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours  
Thither all their bounties bring.  
There eternal Summer dwells,  
And west winds with musky wing  
About the cedarn alleys fling  
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.  
Iris there with humid bow  
Waters the odorous banks, that blow  
Flowers of more mingled hue  
Than her purfled scarf can shew,  
And drenches with Elysian dew  
(List mortals, if your ears be true)  
Beds of hyacinth and roses,  
Where young Adonis oft reposes,  
Waxing well of his deep wound  
In slumber soft, and on the ground  
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen;  
But far above in spangled sheen  
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,  
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranced,  
After her wandring labours long,  
Till free consent the gods among  
Make her his eternal Bride,  
And from her fair unspotted side  
Two blissful twins are to be born,  
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,  
I can fly, or I can run  
Quickly to the green earth's end,  
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,  
And from thence can soar as soon  
To the corners of the Moon.

Mortals, that would follow me,  
Love Virtue, she alone is free;



She can teach ye how to climb  
 Higher than the spheary chime:  
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,  
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

## LYCIDAS

(1637)

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,  
 Ye Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
 And with forced fingers rude  
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.  
 Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear  
 Compels me to disturb your season due;  
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.  
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew  
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.  
 He must not float upon his watery bier  
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well  
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;  
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
 Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:  
 So may some gentle Muse  
 With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,  
 And as he passes turn,  
 And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,  
 Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;  
 Together both, ere the high lawns appeared  
 Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,  
 We drove a-field, and both together heard

What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright  
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westerling  
wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;  
Tempered to the oaten flute  
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel  
From the glad sound would not be absent long;  
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone and never must return!  
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,  
And all their echoes, mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,  
Shall now no more be seen  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

As killing as the canker to the rose,  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white-thorn blows;  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep  
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?  
For neither were ye playing on the steep  
Where your old Bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream.  
Ay me! I fondly dream  
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have  
done?

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,  
Whom universal nature did lament,  
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,  
His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with uncessant care  
To tend the homely, slighted, Shepherd's trade,

And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?  
Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble mind)  
To scorn delights and live laborious days;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,  
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"  
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:  
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistening foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;  
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,  
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,  
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.  
But now my oat proceeds,  
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,  
That came in Neptune's plea.  
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?  
And questioned every gust of rugged wings  
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.  
They knew not of his story;  
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:  
The air was calm, and on the level brine  
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.  
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,  
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,  
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend Sire, went footing slow,  
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,  
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge

Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.

“ Ah! who hath reft,” quoth he, “ my dearest pledge?”

Last came, and last did go,

The pilot of the Galilean Lake;

Two massy keys he bore of metals twain

(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).

He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—

“ How well could I have spared for thee, young  
swain,

Anow of such as, for their bellies’ sake,

Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!

Of other care they little reckoning make

Than how to scramble at the shearers’ feast,

And shove away the worthy bidden guest.

Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to  
hold

A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least

That to the faithful Herdman’s art belongs!

What recks it them? What need they? They are  
sped;

And, when they list, their lean and fleshy songs

Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,

But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;

Besides what the grim Wolf with privy paw

Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

But that two-handed engine at the door

Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”

Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past

That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,

And call the vales, and bid them hither cast

Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use

Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,

Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,

That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,

And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,

The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,  
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,  
The glowing violet,  
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,  
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;  
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,  
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.  
For so, to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.  
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,  
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,  
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount  
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.  
Look homeward, Angel now, and melt with ruth:  
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,  
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:  
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
Through the dear might of Him that walked the  
waves,

Where, other groves and other streams along,  
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the Saints above,  
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no more;  
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,  
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to the oaks and rills,  
While the still Morn went out with sandals grey:  
He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:  
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the western bay.  
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:  
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING THE  
CIVIL WAR AND THE  
PROTECTORATE

1642-1658

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED  
TO THE CITY

(NOVEMBER, 1642)

CAPTAIN, or colonel, or knight in arms,  
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,  
If deed of honour did thee ever please,  
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.  
He can requite thee, for he knows the charms  
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,  
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,  
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.  
Lift not thy spear against the Muse's bower;  
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare  
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower  
Went to the ground; and the repeated air  
Of sad Electra's Poet had the power  
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY

(1644)

LADY! that in the prime of earliest youth  
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,  
And with those few art eminently seen,  
That labour up the Hill of Heavenly Truth,



The better part with Mary and with Ruth  
 Chosen thou hast, and they that overween,  
 And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,  
 No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.  
 Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends  
 To fill thy odorous Lamp with deeds of light.  
 And Hope that reaps not shame; therefore be sure,  
 Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends  
 Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,  
 Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

## TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY

(1644-5)

DAUGHTER to that good Earl, once President  
 Of England's Council and her Treasury,  
 Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,  
 And left them both, more in himself content,  
 Till the sad breaking of that Parliament  
 Broke him, as that dishonest victory  
 At Chæroneæ, fatal to liberty,  
 Killed with report that old man eloquent,  
 Though later born than to have known the days  
 Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,  
 Madam, methinks I see him living yet:  
 So well your words his noble virtues praise  
 That all both judge you to relate them true  
 And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON  
MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES

(1645-6)

A BOOK was writ of late called *Tetrachordon*,  
 And woven close, both matter, form, and style;  
 The subject new: it walked the town a while,  
 Numbering good intellects; now seldom pored on.  
 Cries the stall-reader, " Bless us! what a word on

A title-page is this!" ; and some in file  
 Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-  
 End Green. Why, is it harder, sirs, than *Gordon*,  
*Colkitto*, or *Macdonnel*, or *Galasp*?  
 Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek  
 That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.  
 Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,  
 Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,  
 When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward  
 Greek.

## ON THE SAME

(1645-6)

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs  
 By the known rules of ancient liberty,  
 When straight a barbarous noise environs me  
 Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;  
 As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs  
 Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,  
 Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.  
 But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,  
 That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,  
 And still revolt when Truth would set them free.  
 Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;  
 For who loves that must first be wise and good:  
 But from that mark how far they rove we see,  
 For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE  
 UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT

(1646)

BECAUSE you have thrown off your Prelate Lord,  
 And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,  
 To seize the widowed whore Plurality,  
 From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,  
 Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword

To force our consciences that Christ set free,  
And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,  
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rutherford?  
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,  
Would have been held in high esteem with Pau.  
Must now be named and printed heretics  
By shallow Edwards and Scotch What-d'ye-call!  
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,  
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,  
That so the Parliament  
May with their wholesome and preventive shears  
Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears,  
And succour our just fears,  
When they shall read this clearly in your charge:  
New *Presbyter* is but old Priest writ large.

## TO MR. H. LAWES ON HIS AIRS

(1646)

HARRY, whose tuneful and well-measured song  
First taught our English music how to span  
Words with just note and accent, not to scan  
With Midas' ears, committing short and long,  
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,  
With praise enough for Envy to look wan;  
To after age thou shalt be writ the man  
That with smooth air couldst humour best our  
tongue.  
Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must lend her wing  
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,  
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.  
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher  
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,  
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATH-  
ERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND,  
DECEASED DEC. 16, 1646

(1646)

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,  
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,  
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load  
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.  
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,  
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;  
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,  
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.  
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best  
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams  
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,  
And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes  
Before the Judge; who henceforth bid thee rest,  
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX AT THE  
SIEGE OF COLCHESTER

(1648)

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,  
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,  
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,  
And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,  
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings  
Victory home, though new rebellions raise  
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays  
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.  
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand  
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)  
Till truth and right from violence be freed,  
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand  
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,  
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, ON THE  
PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS  
AT THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROP-  
AGATION OF THE GOSPEL

(1652)

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,  
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud  
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,  
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains  
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,  
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER

(1652)

VANE, young in years, but in sage counsel old,  
Than whom a better senator ne'er held  
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled  
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,  
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold  
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;  
Then to advise how war may best, upheld,  
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,  
In all her equipage; besides, to know  
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means.  
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few  
have done.  
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:

Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans  
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

### ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONTE

(1655)

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,  
Forget not: in thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

### ON HIS BLINDNESS

(1655)

WHEN I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest He returning chide,  
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait."

## TO MR. LAWRENCE

(1656)

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,  
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,  
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire  
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won  
From the hard season gaining? Time will run  
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire  
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire  
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.  
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise  
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice  
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?  
He who of those delights can judge, and spare  
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

## TO CYRIACK SKINNER

(1656)

CYRIACK, whose grandsire on the royal bench  
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,  
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,  
Which others at their bar so often wrench,  
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench  
In mirth that after no repenting draws;  
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,  
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.  
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know  
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;  
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,  
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,  
That with superfluous burden loads the day,  
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.



## TO THE SAME

(1655)

**CYRIACK**, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,  
 To outward view, of blemish or of spot,  
 Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;  
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
 Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,  
 Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not  
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot  
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer  
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?  
 The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied  
 In Liberty's defence, my noble task,  
 Of which all Europe rings from side to side.  
 This thought might lead me through the world's vain  
     mask  
 Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

## ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

(1658)

**METHOUGHT** I saw my late espoused saint  
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
 Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,  
 Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.  
 Mine, as whom washed from spot of childbed taint  
 Purification in the Old Law did save,  
 And such as yet once more I trust to have  
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,  
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.  
 Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight  
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined  
 So clear as in no face with more delight.  
 But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,  
 I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

# PARADISE LOST

1658-1663

## THE VERSE

The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin—rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expresssd them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings—a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

## THE FIRST BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall—the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by

the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell—described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven—for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

**O**F MAN'S first disobedience, and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the World, and all our woe,  
 With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
 Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,  
 Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top  
 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
 That Shepherd who first taught the chosen seed  
 In the beginning how the heavens and earth  
 Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill  
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed  
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
 That with no middle flight intends to soar  
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues  
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
 And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
 Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first  
 Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,  
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,  
 And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark

Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That, to the highth of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,  
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause  
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,  
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off  
From their Creator, and transgress his will  
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.  
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind, what time his pride  
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host  
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring  
To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,  
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim  
Against the throne and monarchy of God,  
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,  
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamantine chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,  
Lay vanquished, rowling in the fiery gulf,  
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom  
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,  
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,  
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.  
At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views  
The dismal situation waste and wild.  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames

No light; but rather darkness visible  
Served onely to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all, but torture without end  
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.  
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared  
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained  
In utter darkness, and their portion set,  
As far removed from God and light of Heaven  
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.  
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!  
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed  
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,  
One next himself in power, and next in crime,  
Long after known in Palestine, and named  
BEËLZEBUB. To whom the Arch-Enemy,  
And thence in Heaven called SATAN, with bold words  
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—  
“If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen! how changed  
From him!—who, in the happy realms of light,  
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine  
Myriads, though bright—if he whom mutual league,  
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope  
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,  
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined  
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest  
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger proved  
He with his thunder: and till then who knew  
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,  
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,  
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,  
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,  
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,  
And to the fierce contention brought along  
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,  
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,

His utmost power with adverse power opposed  
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,  
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?  
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield:  
And what is else not to be overcome.  
That glory never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace  
With suppliant knee, and deify his power  
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late  
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;  
That were an ignominy and shame beneath  
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,  
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;  
Since, through experience of this great event,  
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,  
We may with more successful hope resolve  
To wage by force or guile eternal war,  
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,  
Who now triumphs', and in the excess of joy  
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,  
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;  
And him thus answered soon his bold Compeer:—

"O Prince, O Chief of many thronè Powers  
That led the embattled Seraphim to war  
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds  
Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,  
And put to proof his high supremacy,  
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!  
Too well I see and rue the dire event  
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,  
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host  
In horrible destruction laid thus low,  
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences  
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains  
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,  
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state  
Here swallowed up in endless misery.



But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now  
Of force believe almighty, since no less  
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)  
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,  
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,  
Or do him mightier service as his thralls  
By right of war, whate'er his business be,  
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,  
Or do errands in the gloomy Deep?  
What can it then avail though yet we feel  
Strength undiminished, or eternal being  
To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend  
replied:—

"Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure—  
To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
As being the contrary to His high will  
Whom we resist. If then his providence  
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
Our labour must be to pervert that end,  
And out of good still to find means of evil;  
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps  
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.  
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled  
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit  
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,  
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid  
The fiery surge that from the precipice  
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,  
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,  
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now  
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.  
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn  
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.  
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,  
The seat of desolation, void of light,



Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;  
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;  
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,  
Consult how we may henceforth most offend  
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,  
How overcome this dire calamity,  
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,  
If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest Mate,  
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,  
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge  
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den  
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast  
Leviathan, which God of all his works  
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.  
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,  
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,  
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind,  
Moors by his side under the lee, while night  
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.  
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,  
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence  
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will  
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
Left him at large to his own dark designs,  
That with reiterated crimes he might  
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought  
Evil to others, and enraged might see  
How all his malice served but to bring forth  
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn  
On Man by him seduced, but on himself  
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.  
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool

His mighty stature; on each hand the flames  
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and,  
rowled

In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.  
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight  
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,  
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land  
He lights—if it were land that ever burned  
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,  
And such appeared in hue as when the force  
Of subterranean wind transports a hill  
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side  
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible  
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,  
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,  
And leave a singèd bottom all involved  
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole  
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next Mate;  
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood  
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,  
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”  
Said then the lost Archangel, “this the seat  
That we must change for Heaven?—this mournful  
gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since He  
Who now is sovran can dispose and bid  
What shall be right: fardest from Him is best,  
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme  
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,  
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,  
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,  
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings  
A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.  
What matter where, if I be still the same,  
And what I should be, all but less than he  
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built

Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,  
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:  
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.  
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,  
The associates and co-partners of our loss,  
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,  
And call them not to share with us their part  
In this unhappy mansion, or once more  
With rallied arms to try what may be yet  
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub  
Thus answered:—"Leader of those armies bright  
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled!  
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge  
Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft  
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge  
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults  
Their surest signal—they will soon resume  
New courage and revive, though now they lie  
Grovvelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,  
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;  
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth!"

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend  
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast. The broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.  
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine  
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand—  
He walked with, to support uneasy steps  
Over the burning marle, not like those steps  
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime  
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.  
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach

Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called  
His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced  
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks  
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades  
High over-arched imbower; or scattered sedge  
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed  
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o’erthrew  
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,  
While with perfidious hatred they pursued  
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld  
From the safe shore their floating carcasses  
And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,  
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,  
Under amazement of their hideous change.  
He called so loud that all the hollow deep  
Of Hell resounded:—“Princes, Potentates,  
Warriors, the Flower of Heaven—once yours; now  
lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize  
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place  
After the toil of battle to repose  
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find  
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?  
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds  
Cherub and Seraph rowling in the flood  
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon  
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern  
The advantage, and, descending tread us down  
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts  
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—  
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!”

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung  
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,  
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,  
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.  
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight  
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;  
Yet to their General’s voice they soon obeyed  
Innumerable. As when the potent rod

Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,  
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,  
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;  
So numberless were those bad Angels seen  
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,  
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;  
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear  
Of their great Sultan waving to direct  
Their course, in even balance down they light  
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:  
A multitude like which the populous North  
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass  
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons  
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread  
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.  
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,  
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood  
Their great Commander—godlike Shapes, and Forms  
Excelling human; princely Dignities;  
And powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,  
Though of their names in Heavenly records now  
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased  
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.  
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve  
Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth,  
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,  
By falsities and lies the greatest part  
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake  
God their Creator, and the invisible  
Glory of Him that made them to transform  
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned  
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,  
And devils to adore for deities:  
Then were they known to men by various names,  
And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who  
last,  
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,

At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth  
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,  
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.

The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell  
Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix  
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,  
Their altars by His altar, gods adored  
Among the nations round, and durst abide  
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned  
Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed  
Within His sanctuary itself their shrines,  
Abominations; and with cursèd things  
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,  
And with their darkness durst affront His light.  
First, *Moloch*, horrid King, besmeared with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;  
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,  
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire  
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite  
Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,  
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream  
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such  
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart  
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build  
His temple right against the temple of God  
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove  
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence  
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.  
Next *Chemos*, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,  
From Aroar to Nebo and the wild  
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon  
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond  
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,  
And Elealè to the Asphaltick Pool:  
Peor his other name, when he enticed  
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,  
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged  
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove  
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,

Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.  
With these came they who, from the bordering flood  
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts  
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names  
Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth*—those male,  
These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,  
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft  
And uncompounded is their essence pure,  
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,  
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,  
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,  
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,  
Can execute their aery purposes,  
And works of love or enmity fulfil.  
For those the race of Israel oft forsook  
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left  
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down  
To bestial gods; for which their heads, as low  
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear  
Of despicable foes. With these in troop  
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called  
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;  
To whose bright image nightly by the moon  
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;  
In Sion also not unsung, where stood  
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built  
By that uxorious king whose heart, though large,  
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell  
To idols foul. *Thammuz* came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,  
While smooth Adonis from his native rock  
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood  
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale  
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,  
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch  
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,  
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries  
Of alienated Judah. Next came one



Who mourned in earnest, when the captive Ark  
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,  
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,  
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers:  
*Dagon* his name, sea-monster, upward man  
And downward fish; yet had his temple high  
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast  
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,  
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.  
Him followed *Rimmon*, whose delightful seat  
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks  
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.  
He also against the house of God was bold:  
A leper once he lost, and gained a king—  
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew  
God's altar to disparage and displace  
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn  
His odious offerings, and adore the gods  
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared  
A crew who, under names of old renown—  
*Osiris, Isis, Orus*, and their train—  
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused  
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek  
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms  
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape  
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed  
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king  
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,  
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox—  
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed  
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke  
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.  
*Belial* came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd  
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love,  
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood  
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he  
In temples and at altars, when the priest  
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled  
With lust and violence the house of God?  
In courts and palaces he also reigns,

And in luxurious cities, where the noise  
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
And injury and outrage; and, when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.  
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night  
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door  
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.

These were the prime in order and in might:  
The rest were long to tell; though far renowned  
The Ionian gods—of Javan's issue held  
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,  
Their boasted parents;—*Titan*, Heaven's first-born,  
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized  
By younger *Saturn*: he from mightier Jove,  
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;  
So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in Crete  
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top  
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,  
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,  
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds  
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old  
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,  
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks  
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared  
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief  
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost  
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast  
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride  
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised  
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:  
Then straight commands that, at the war-like sound  
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared  
His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed  
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:  
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled  
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,  
Shon like a meteor streaming to the wind,

With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,  
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:  
At which the universal host up-sent  
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond  
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.  
All in a moment through the gloom were seen  
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,  
With orient colours waving: with them rose  
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms  
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array  
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move  
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood  
Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised  
To highth of noblest temper heroes old  
Arming to battle, and instead of rage  
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved  
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;  
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage  
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase  
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain  
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,  
Breathing united force with fixèd thought,  
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed  
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now  
Advanced in view they stand—a horrid front  
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise  
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,  
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief  
Had to impose. He through the armèd files  
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse  
The whole battalion views—their order due,  
Their visages and stature as of Gods;  
Their number last he sums. And now his heart  
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,  
Glories: for never, since created Man,  
Met such imbodied force as, named with these,  
Could merit more than that small infantry  
Warred on by cranes—though all the giant brood  
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined

That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side  
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds  
In fable or romance of Uther's son,  
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;  
And all who since, baptized or infidel,  
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,  
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,  
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore  
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond  
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed  
Their dread Commander. He, above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost  
All her original brightness, nor appeared  
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen  
Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shon  
Above them all the Archangel: but his face  
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows  
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast  
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold  
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather  
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned  
For ever now to have their lot in pain—  
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced  
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung  
For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,  
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire  
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,  
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,  
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared  
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend  
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round

With all his peers: Attention held them mute.  
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,  
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last  
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:—

“O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers  
Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that strife  
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,  
As this place testifies, and this dire change,  
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,  
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth  
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared  
How such united force of gods, how such  
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?  
For who can yet believe, though after loss,  
That all these puissant legions, whose exile  
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend,  
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?  
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,  
If counsels different, or danger shunned  
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns  
Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure  
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,  
Consent or custom, and his regal state  
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed—  
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.  
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,  
So as not either to provoke, or dread  
New war provoked: our better part remains  
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,  
What force effected not; that he no less  
At length from us may find, Who overcomes  
By force hath overcome but half his foe.  
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife  
There went a fame in Heaven that He ere long  
Intended to create, and therein plant  
A generation whom his choice regard  
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.  
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps  
Our first eruption—thither, or elsewhere;  
For this infernal pit shall never hold

Cælestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss  
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts  
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;  
For who can think submission? War, then, war  
Open or understood, must be resolved.”  
He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew  
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze  
Far around illumined Hell. Highly they raged  
Against the Highest and fierce with grasped arms  
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,  
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose griesly top  
Belched fire and rowling smoke; the rest entire  
Shon with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign  
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,  
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,  
A numerous brigad hastened: as when bands  
Of pioners, with spade and pickaxe armed,  
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,  
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—  
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell  
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and  
thoughts

Were always downward bent, admiring more  
The riches of Heaven’s pavement, trodden gold,  
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed  
In vision beatific. By him first  
Men also, and by suggestion taught,  
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands  
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth  
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew  
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,  
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire  
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best  
Deserve the pretious bane. And here let those  
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell  
Of Babel and the works of Memphian kings,  
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,  
And strength, and art, are easily outdone

By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour  
What in an age they, with incessant toil  
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.  
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,  
That underneath had vein's of liquid fire  
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude  
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,  
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.  
A third as soon had formed within the ground  
A various mould, and from the boiling cells  
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;  
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,  
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.  
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge  
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound  
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet—  
Built like a temple, where pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
With golden architrave; nor did there want  
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:  
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babilon  
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence  
Equalled in all their glories, to inshrine  
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat  
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria strove  
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile  
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the doors,  
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide  
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth  
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,  
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row  
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed  
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light  
As from a sky. The hasty multitude  
Admiring entered; and the work some praise,  
And some the Architect. His hand was known  
In Heaven by many a towered structure high,  
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,  
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King  
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,



Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright,  
Nor was his name unheard or unadored  
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land  
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell  
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove  
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn  
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,  
A summer's day, and with the setting sun  
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,  
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle. Thus they relate,  
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout  
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now  
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape  
By all his engines, but was headlong sent,  
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd Haralds, by command  
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony  
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim  
A solemn council forthwith to be held  
At Pandæmonium, the high capital  
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called  
From every band and squared regiment  
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon  
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came  
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates  
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall  
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold  
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair  
Defied the best of Panim chivalry  
To mortal combat, or career with lance),  
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,  
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees  
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,  
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive  
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers  
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,  
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,  
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer  
Their state-affairs: so thick the aerie crowd  
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,

Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed  
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,  
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room  
Throng numberless—like that pygmean race  
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,  
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side  
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,  
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon  
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth  
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance  
Intent, with jocond music charm his ear;  
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.  
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms  
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,  
Though without number still, amidst the hall  
Of that infernal court. But far within,  
And in their own dimensions like themselves,  
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim  
In close recess and secret conclave sat,  
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,  
Frequent and full. After short silence then,  
And summons read, the great consult began.

## THE SECOND BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan—to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them, by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far  
Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,  
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised  
To that bad eminence; and, from despair  
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires  
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue  
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught  
His proud imaginations thus displayed:—

“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!—  
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold  
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,  
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent  
Celestial Virtues rising will appear  
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,  
And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—  
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,  
Did first create your leader—next, free choice,  
With what besides in council or in fight  
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,  
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more  
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,  
Yielded with full consent. The happier state  
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw  
Envy from each inferior; but who here  
Will envy whom the highest place exposes  
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s aim  
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share  
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good  
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there  
From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell  
Precedence; none whose portion is so small  
Of present pain that with ambitious mind  
Will covet more! With this advantage, then,  
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,  
More than can be in Heaven, we now return  
To claim our just inheritance of old,  
Surer to prosper than prosperity  
Could have assured us; and by what best way,

Whether of open war or covert guile,  
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,  
Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit  
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.  
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed  
Equal in strength, and rather than be less  
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost  
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,  
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:—

"My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,  
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those  
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.  
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—  
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait  
The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,  
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place  
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,  
The prison of His tyranny who reigns  
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,  
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once  
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,  
Turning our tortures into horrid arms  
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise  
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear  
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see  
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage  
Among his Angels and his throne itself  
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,  
His own invented torments. But perhaps  
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale  
With upright wing against a higher foe!  
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench  
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,  
That in our proper motion we ascend  
Up to our native seat; descent and fall  
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,  
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear  
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,  
With what compulsion and laborious flight

We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;  
The event is feared! Should we again provoke  
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find  
To our destruction, if there be in Hell  
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse  
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned  
In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;  
Where pain of unextinguishable fire  
Must exercise us without hope of end  
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge  
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,  
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,  
We should be quite abolished, and expire.  
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense  
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,  
Will either quite consume us, and reduce  
To nothing this essential—happier far  
Than miserable to have eternal being!—  
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,  
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst  
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel  
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,  
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,  
Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne:  
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.”

He ended frowning, and his look denounced  
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous  
To less than gods. On the other side up rose  
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.  
A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed  
For dignity composed, and high exploit.  
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue  
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear  
The better reason, to perplex and dash  
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low—  
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds  
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,  
And with persuasive accent thus began:—

“I should be much for open war, O Peers,  
As not behind in hate, if what was urged

Main reason to persuade immediate war  
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast  
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;  
When he who most excels in fact of arms,  
In what he counsels and in what excels  
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair  
And utter dissolution, as the scope  
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.  
First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled  
With armed watch, that render all access  
Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep  
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing  
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,  
Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way  
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise  
With blackest insurrection to confound  
Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,  
All incorruptible, would on his throne  
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,  
Incapable of stain, would soon expel  
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,  
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope  
Is flat despair: we must exasperate  
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage:  
And that must end us; that must be our cure—  
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,  
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,  
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,  
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost  
In the wide womb of uncreated Night,  
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,  
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe  
Can give it, or will ever? How he can  
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.  
Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire,  
Belike through impotence or unaware,  
To give his enemies their wish, and end  
Them in his anger whom his anger saves  
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'  
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,

Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;  
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,  
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst—  
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?  
What when we fled amain, pursued and strook  
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought  
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed  
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay  
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.  
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,  
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,  
And plunge us in the flames; or from above  
Should intermitted vengeance arm again  
His red right hand to plague us? What if all  
Her stores were opened, and this firmament  
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,  
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall  
One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,  
Designing or exhorting glorious war,  
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,  
Each on his rock transfix'd, the sport and prey  
Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk  
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,  
There to converse with everlasting groans,  
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,  
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.  
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike  
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile  
With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye  
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's  
          highth

All these our motions vain sees and derides,  
Not more almighty to resist our might  
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.  
Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heaven  
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here  
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,  
By my advice; since fate inevitable  
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,  
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,



Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust  
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,  
If we were wise, against so great a foe  
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.  
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold  
And ventrous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear  
What yet they know must follow—to endure  
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,  
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now  
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,  
Our Supreme Foe in time may such remit  
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,  
Not mind us not offending, satisfied  
With what is punished; whence these raging fires  
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.  
Our purer essence then will overcome  
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;  
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed  
In temper and in nature, will receive  
Familiar the fierce heat; and void of pain,  
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;  
Besides what hope the never-ending flight  
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change  
Worth waiting—since our present lot appears  
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,  
If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,  
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,  
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—

“Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven  
We war, if war be best, or to regain  
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then  
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield  
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.  
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain  
The latter; for what place can be for us  
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent,  
And publish grace to all, on promise made

Of new subjection; with what eyes could we  
Stand in his presence humble, and receive  
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne  
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing  
Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits  
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes  
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,  
Our servile offerings? This must be our task  
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome  
Eternity so spent in worship paid  
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,  
By force impossible, by leave obtained  
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state  
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek  
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own  
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,  
Free and to none accountable, preferring  
Hard liberty before the easy yoke  
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear  
Then most conspicuous when great things of small,  
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,  
We can create, and in what place soe'er  
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain  
Through labour and indurance. This deep world  
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst  
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire  
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,  
And with the majesty of darkness round  
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,  
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!  
As He our darkness, cannot we His light  
Imitate when we please? This desert soil  
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;  
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise  
Magnificence; and what can Heaven shew more?  
Our torments also may, in length of time,  
Become our elements, these piercing fires  
As soft as now severe, our temper changed  
Into their temper; which must needs remove  
The sensible of pain. All things invite

To peaceful counsels, and the settled state  
Of order, how in safety best we may  
Compose our present evils, with regard  
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite  
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled  
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain  
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long  
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull  
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,  
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay  
After the tempest. Such applause was heard  
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,  
Advising peace: for such another field  
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear  
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël  
Wrought still within them; and no less desire  
To found this nether empire, which might rise,  
By policy and long process' of time,  
In emulation opposite to Heaven.  
Which when Beëlzebub perceived—than whom,  
Satan except, none higher sat—with grave  
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed  
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat, and public care;  
And princely counsel in his face yet shon,  
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,  
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear  
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look  
Drew audience and attention still as night  
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:—

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of  
Heaven,  
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now  
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called  
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote  
Inclines—here to continue, and build up here  
A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,  
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed  
This place our dungeon—not our safe retreat

Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt  
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league  
Banded against his throne, but to remain  
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,  
Under the inevitable curb, reserved  
His captive multitude. For He, be sure,  
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign  
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part  
By our revolt, but over Hell extend  
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule  
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.  
What sit we then projecting peace and war?  
War hath determined us and foiled with loss  
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none  
Voutsafed or sought; for what peace will be given  
To us enslaved, but custody severe,  
And stripes and arbitrary punishment  
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,  
But, to our power, hostility and hate,  
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,  
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least  
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice  
In doing what we most in suffering feel?  
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need  
With dangerous expedition to invade  
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,  
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find  
Some easier enterprise? There is a place  
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven  
Err not)—another World, the happy seat  
Of some new race, called Man, about this time  
To be created like to us, though less  
In power and excellence, but favoured more  
Of Him who rules above; so was His will  
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath  
That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed  
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn  
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould  
Or substance, how endued, and what their power  
And where their weakness; how attempted best,

By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,  
And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure  
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,  
The utmost border of his kingdom, left  
To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,  
Some advantageous act may be achieved  
By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire  
To waste his whole creation, or possess  
All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,  
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,  
Seduce them to our party, that their God  
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand  
Abolish his own works. This would surpass  
Common revenge, and interrupt His joy  
In our confusion, and our joy upraise  
In His disturbance; when his darling sons,  
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse  
Their frail original, and faded bliss—  
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth  
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here  
Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beëlzebub,  
Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised  
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,  
But from the author of all ill, could spring  
So deep a malice, to confound the race  
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell  
To mingle and involve, done all to spite  
The great Creator? But their spite still serves  
His glory to augment. The bold design  
Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy  
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent  
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—  
“ Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,  
Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,  
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep  
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,  
Nearer our ancient Seat—perhaps in view  
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring  
arms,  
'And opportune excursion, we may chance

Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone  
Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,  
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam  
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,  
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,  
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we  
send

In search of this new World? whom shall we find  
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet  
The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,  
And through the palpable obscure find out  
His uncouth way, or spread his aerie flight,  
Upborne with indefatigable wings  
Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive  
The happy Isle? What strength, what art, can then  
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe  
Through the strict senteries and stations thick  
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need  
All circumspection: and we now no less  
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send  
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held  
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared  
To second, or oppose, or undertake  
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,  
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each  
In other's countenance read his own dismay,  
Astonished. None among the choice and prime  
Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found  
So hardy as to proffer or accept,  
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,  
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised  
Above his fellows, with monarchical pride  
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—

"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!  
With reason hath deep silence and demur  
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way  
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light.  
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,  
Outrageous to devour, immures us round

Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,  
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.  
These passed, if any pass, the void profound  
Of unessential Night receives him next,  
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being  
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.  
If thence he scape, into whatever world,  
Or unknown region, what remains him less  
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?  
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,  
And this imperial sovranity, adorned  
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed  
And judged of public moment in the shape  
Of difficulty or danger, could deter  
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume  
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,  
Refusing to accept as great a share  
Of hazard as of honour, due alike  
To him who reigns, and so much to him due  
Of hazard more as he above the rest  
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,  
Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at home,  
While here shall be our home, what best may ease  
The present misery, and render Hell  
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm  
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain  
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch  
Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad  
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek  
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise  
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose  
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;  
Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,  
Others among the chief might offer now,  
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,  
And, so refused, might in opinion stand  
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute  
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they  
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice  
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.



Their rising all at once was as the sound  
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend  
With awful reverence prone, and as a God  
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.  
Nor failed they to express how much they praised  
That for the general safety he despised  
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned  
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast  
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,  
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:  
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds  
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread  
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element  
Scowls o'er the darkened lantskip snow or shower,  
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,  
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,  
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.  
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned  
Firm concord holds; men only disagree  
Of creatures rational, though under hope  
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife  
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars  
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:  
As if (which might induce us to accord)  
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth  
In order came the grand Infernal Peers:  
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed  
Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less  
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,  
And god-like imitated state: him round  
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed  
With bright imblazonry, and horrent arms.  
Then of their session ended they bid cry  
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:

Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim  
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,  
By harald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss  
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell  
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.  
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised  
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers  
Disband; and, wandering, each his several way  
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice,  
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find  
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain  
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.  
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,  
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,  
As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;  
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal  
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:  
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears  
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush  
To battle in the clouds; before each van  
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their spears,  
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms  
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.  
Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,  
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air  
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:—  
As when Alcides, from Æchalia crowned  
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore  
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,  
And Lichas from the top of Ceta threw  
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
With notes angelical to many a harp  
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall  
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate  
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.  
Their song was partial; but the harmony  
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)  
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment  
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet

(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)  
Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.  
Of good and evil much they argued then,  
Of happiness and final misery,  
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:  
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—  
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm  
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite  
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast  
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.  
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,  
On bold adventure to discover wide  
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps  
Might yield them easier habitation, bend  
Four ways their flying march, along the banks  
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge  
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—  
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;  
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;  
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud  
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,  
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.  
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,  
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rowls  
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks  
Forthwith his former state and being forgets—  
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.  
Beyond this flood a frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land  
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,  
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog  
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,  
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air  
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.

Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,  
At certain revolutions all the damned  
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,  
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice  
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine  
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round  
Periods of time,—thence hurried back to fire.  
They ferry over this Lethean sound  
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,  
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach  
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose  
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,  
All in one moment, and so near the brink;  
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,  
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards  
The ford, and of itself the water flies  
All taste of living wight, as once it fled  
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on  
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,  
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,  
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found  
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale  
They passed, and many a region dolorous,  
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,  
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of  
death—

A universe of death, which God by curse  
Created evil, for evil only good;  
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,  
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,  
Abominable, inutterable, and worse  
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,  
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,  
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,  
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell  
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes  
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;  
Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then soars

Up to the fiery concave towering high.  
As when far off at sea a fleet descried  
Hangs in the clouds, by æquinoctial winds  
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles  
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring  
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,  
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,  
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed  
Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear  
Hell-hounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,  
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,  
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,  
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,  
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat  
On either side a formidable Shape.  
The one seemed a woman to the waist, and fair,  
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,  
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed  
With mortal sting. About her middle round  
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked  
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung  
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,  
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,  
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled  
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these  
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts  
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;  
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called  
In secret, riding through the air she comes,  
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon  
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—  
If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed  
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat

The monster moving onward came as fast  
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.  
The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired—  
Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,  
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),  
And with disdainful look thus first began:—

“Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,  
That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance  
Thy miscreated front athwart my way  
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,  
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.  
Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,  
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.”

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:—  
“Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,  
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then  
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms  
Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,  
Conjured against the Highest—for which both thou  
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned  
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?  
And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,  
Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here and scorn,  
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,  
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,  
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,  
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue  
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart  
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,  
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold  
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,  
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood  
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,  
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge  
In the artick sky, and from his horrid hair  
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head  
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands  
No second stroke intend; and such a frown  
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,



With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on  
Over the Caspian,—then stand front to front  
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow  
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.  
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell  
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;  
For never but once more was either like  
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds  
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,  
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat  
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,  
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

“O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,  
“Against thy only son? What fury, O son,  
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart  
Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom?  
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while  
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute  
Whate'er his wrauth, which He calls justice, bids—  
His wrauth, which one day will destroy ye both!”

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest  
Forbore: then these to her Satan returned:—

“So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange  
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,  
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds  
What it intends, till first I know of thee  
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why  
In this infernal vale first met; thou call'st  
Me father, and that fantasm call'st my son.  
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now  
Sight more detestable than him and thee.”

To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:—  
“Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem  
Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair  
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight  
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined  
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,  
All on a sudden miserable pain  
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum  
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast



Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,  
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,  
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,  
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized  
All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid  
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign  
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,  
I pleased, and with attractive graces won  
The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft  
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,  
Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st  
With me in secret that my womb conceived  
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,  
And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained  
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe  
Clear victory; to our part loss and rout  
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,  
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down  
Into this Deep; and in the general fall  
I also: at which time this powerful Key  
Into my hands was given, with charge to keep  
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass  
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat  
Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,  
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,  
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.  
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,  
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,  
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain  
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew  
Transformed: but he my inbred enemy  
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,  
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*  
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed  
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*  
I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,  
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,  
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,  
And, in embraces forcible and foul  
Engendering with me, of that rape begot

These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry  
Surround me, as thou saw'st—hourly conceived  
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite  
To me: for, when they list, into the womb  
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw  
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth  
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,  
That rest or intermission none I find.  
Before mine eyes in opposition sits  
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,  
And me, his parent, would full soon devour  
For want of other prey, but that he knows  
His end with mine involved, and knows that I  
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,  
Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.  
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun  
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope  
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,  
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,  
Save He who reigns above, none can resist.”

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore  
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered  
smooth:—

“Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy  
sire,

And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge  
Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys  
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change  
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of—know,  
I come no enemy, but to set free  
From out this dark and dismal house of pain  
Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host  
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,  
Fell with us from on high. From them I go  
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all  
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread  
The unfounded Deep, and through the void immense  
To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold  
Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now  
Created vast and round—a place of bliss

In the pourlieues of Heaven; and therein placed  
A race of upstart creatures, to supply  
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,  
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,  
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught  
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste  
To know; and this once known, shall soon return  
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death  
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen  
Wing silently the buxom air, imbalmed  
With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled  
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."

He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and  
Death

Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear  
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw  
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced  
His mother bad, and thus bespake her Sire:—

"The key of this infernal Pit, by due  
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,  
I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock  
These adamantine gates; against all force  
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,  
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.  
But what owe I to His commands above,  
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down  
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,  
To sit in hateful office here confined,  
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born—  
Here in perpetual agony and pain,  
With terrors and with clamours compassed round  
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?  
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou  
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey  
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon  
To that new world of light and bliss, among  
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign  
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems  
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,

Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;  
And, toward the gate rowling her bestial train,  
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,  
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers  
Could once have moved; then in the keyhole turns  
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar  
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease  
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut  
Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,  
That with extended wings a bannered host,  
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through  
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;  
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth  
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.  
Before their eyes in sudden view appear  
The secrets of the hoary Deep—a dark  
Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
Without dimension: where length, breadth, and highth,  
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night  
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold  
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise  
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.  
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,  
Strive here for maistrie, and to battle bring  
Their embryon atoms: they around the flag  
Of each his faction, in their several clans,  
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,  
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands  
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,  
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise  
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere  
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,  
And by decision more imbroils the fray  
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,  
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss,  
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,

Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,  
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed  
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,  
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain  
His dark materials to create more worlds—  
Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend  
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,  
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith  
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed  
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare  
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms  
With all her battering engines, bent to rase  
Some capital city; or less than if this frame  
Of heaven were falling, and these elements  
In mutiny had from her axle torn  
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans  
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke  
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,  
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides  
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets  
A vast vacuity. All unawares,  
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops  
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour  
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,  
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,  
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him  
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—  
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,  
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares,  
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,  
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.  
As when a gryfon through the wilderness  
With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,  
Pursues the Arimpasian, who by stealth  
Had from his wakeful custody purloined  
The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend  
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,  
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,  
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.  
At length, a universal hubbub wild

Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,  
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear  
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies  
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power  
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss  
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask  
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies  
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne  
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread  
Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthroned  
Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,  
The consort of his reign; and by them stood  
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name  
Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,  
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,  
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:—

“Ye Powers

And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,  
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy  
With purpose to explore or to disturb  
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint  
Wandering this darksome desert, as my way  
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,  
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,  
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds  
Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,  
From your dominion won, the Ethereal King  
Possesses lately, thither to arrive  
I travel this profound. Direct my course;  
Directed, no mean recompense it brings  
To your behoof, if I that region lost.  
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce  
To her original darkness and your sway  
(Which is my present journey), and once more  
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.  
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!”

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,  
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,  
Answered:—“I know thee, stranger, who thou art—



That mighty leading Angel, who of late  
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.  
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host  
Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,  
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,  
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates  
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,  
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here  
Keep residence; if all I can will serve  
That little which is left so to defend,  
Encroached on still through our intestine broils  
Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell,  
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;  
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world  
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain  
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell!  
If that way be your walk, you have not far;  
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;  
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply,  
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,  
With fresh alacrity and force renewed  
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,  
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock  
Of fighting elements, on all sides round  
Environed, wins his way; harder beset  
And more endangered than when Argo passed  
Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,  
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned  
Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered.  
So he with difficulty and labour hard  
Moved on. With difficulty and labour he;  
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,  
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,  
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven).  
Paved after him a broad and beaten way  
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf  
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,  
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb  
Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse



With easy intercourse pass to and fro  
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom  
God and good Angels guard by special grace.  
But now at last the sacred influence  
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven  
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night  
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins  
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,  
As from her utmost works, a broken foe,  
With tumult less and with less hostile din;  
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,  
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,  
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds  
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;  
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,  
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold  
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide  
In circuit, undetermined square or round,  
With opal towers and battlements adorned  
Of living sapphire, once his native seat,  
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,  
This pendent World, in bigness as a star  
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.  
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,  
Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

### THE THIRD BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this World, then newly created; shews him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own Justice and Wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free, and able enough to have withstood his Tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man: but God again declares that Grace cannot be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice; Man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his

offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for Man: the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all Names in Heaven and Earth; commands all the Angels to adore him. They obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this World's outermost orb; where wandering he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither: thence comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence to the orb of the Sun: he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel, and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new Creation, and Man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed: Alights first on Mount Niphates.

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!  
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam  
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproachèd light  
Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!  
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal Stream,  
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,  
Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
The rising World of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless Infinite!  
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,  
Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained  
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,  
Through utter and through middle Darkness borne,  
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre  
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,  
Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down  
The dark descent, and up to re-ascend,  
Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,  
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou  
Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowl in vain  
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;  
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt

Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,  
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief  
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,  
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,  
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget  
Those other two equalled with me in fate,  
(So were I equalled with them in renown!)  
Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides,  
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:  
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move  
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird  
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,  
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year  
Seasons return; but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,  
Presented with a universal blank  
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,  
From the pure Empyrean where He sits  
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,  
His own works and their works at once to view:  
About him all the Sanctities of Heaven  
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received  
Beatitude past utterance; on his right  
The radiant image of his glory sat,  
His only Son. On Earth he first beheld  
Our two first parents, yet the only two  
Of mankind, in the Happy Garden placed,  
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,

Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,  
In blissful solitude. He then surveyed  
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there  
Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night,  
In the dun air sublime, and ready now  
To stoop, with wearied wings and willing feet,  
On the bare outside of this World, that seemed  
Firm land imbosomed without firmament,  
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.  
Him God beholding from his prospect high,  
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,  
Thus to His only Son foreseeing spake:—

“Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage  
Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds  
Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains  
Heaped on him there, nor yet the main Abyss  
Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems  
On desperate revenge, that shall redound  
Upon his own rebellious head. And now,  
Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way  
Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,  
Directly towards the new-created World,  
And Man there placed, with purpose to assay  
If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,  
By some false guile pervert: and shall pervert;  
For Man will hearken to his glozing lies,  
And easily transgress the sole command,  
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall  
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?  
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me  
All he could have; I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.  
Such I created all the Ethereal Powers  
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;  
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.  
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere  
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,  
Where only what they needs must do appeared,  
Not what they would? What praise could they receive,  
What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,

When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),  
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,  
Made passive both, had served Necessity,  
Not Me? They, therefore, as to right belonged  
So were created, nor can justly accuse  
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,  
As if Predestination overruled  
Their will, disposed by absolute decree  
Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed  
Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew,  
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.  
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,  
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,  
They trespass, authors to themselves in all,  
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so  
I formed them free, and free they must remain  
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change  
Their nature, and revoke the high decree  
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained  
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.  
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,  
Self-tempted, self-depraved; Man falls, deceived  
By the other first: Man, therefore, shall find grace;  
The other, none. In mercy and justice both,  
Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;  
But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."

Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled  
All Heaven, and in the blessèd Spirits elect  
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen  
Most glorious; in him all his Father shon  
Substantially expressed; and in his face  
Divine compassion visibly appeared,  
Love without end, and without measure grace;  
Which uttering, thus He to his Father spake:—

"O Father, gracious was that word which closed  
Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;  
For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol  
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound

Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne  
Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.  
For, should Man finally be lost—should Man,  
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,  
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined  
With his own folly—! That be from thee far,  
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge  
Of all things made, and judgest only right!  
Or shall the Adversary thus obtain  
His end, and frustrate thine? Shall he fulfil  
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught  
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom  
Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell  
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,  
By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself  
Abolish thy creation, and unmake,  
For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?—  
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both  
Be questioned and blasphemed without defense.”

To whom the great Creator thus replied:—  
“O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,  
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone  
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,  
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all  
As my eternal purpose hath decreed.  
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;  
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me  
Freely voutsafed. Once more I will renew  
His lapsed powers, though forfeit, and enthralled  
By sin to foul exorbitant desires:  
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand  
On even ground against his mortal foe—  
By me upheld, that he may know how frail  
His fallen condition is, and to me owe  
All his deliverance, and to none but me.  
Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,  
Elect above the rest; so is my will:  
The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned  
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes  
The incensed Deity, while offered grace



Invites; for I will clear their senses dark  
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts  
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.  
To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,  
Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,  
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.  
And I will place within them as a guide  
My umpire Conscience; whom if they will hear,  
Light after light well used they shall attain,  
And to the end persisting safe arrive.  
This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,  
They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;  
But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,  
That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;  
And none but such from mercy I exclude.—  
But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,  
Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins  
Against the high supremacy of Heaven,  
Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all,  
To expiate his treason hath naught left,  
But, to destruction sacred and devote,  
He with his whole posterity must die;—  
Die he or Justice must; unless for him  
Some other, able, and as willing, pay  
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.  
Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?  
Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem  
Man's mortal crime, and just, the unjust to save?  
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"

He asked, but all the Heavenly Quire stood mute,  
And silence was in Heaven: on Man's behalf  
Patron or intercessor none appeared—  
Much less that durst upon his own head draw  
The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.  
And now without redemption all mankind  
Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell  
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,  
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,  
His dearest mediation thus renewed:—

“Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace;



And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,  
The speediest of thy wingèd messengers,  
To visit all thy creatures, and to all  
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?  
Happy for Man, so coming! He her aid  
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost—  
Atonement for himself, or offering meet,  
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.  
Behold *me*, then: me for him, life for life,  
I offer; on me let thine anger fall;  
Account me Man: I for his sake will leave  
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee  
Freely put off, and for him lastly die  
Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage.  
Under his gloomy power I shall not long  
Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess  
Life in myself for ever; by thee I live;  
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,  
All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,  
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave  
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul  
For ever with corruption there to dwell;  
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue  
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.  
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop  
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed;  
I through the ample air in triumph high  
Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show  
The powers of Darkness bound. Thou, at the sight  
Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,  
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes—  
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave;  
Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,  
Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,  
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud  
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured  
And reconciliation: wrath shall be no more  
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.”  
His words here ended; but his meek aspect  
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love

To mortal man, above which only shon  
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice  
Glad to be offered, he attends the will  
Of his great Father. Admiration seized  
All Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,  
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied:—

“O thou in Heaven and Earth the only peace  
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou  
My sole complacence! well thou know’st how dear  
To me are all my works; nor Man the least,  
Though last created, that for him I spare  
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,  
By losing thee a while, the whole race lost!  
Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,  
Their nature also to thy nature join;  
And be thyself Man among men on Earth,  
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,  
By wondrous birth; be thou in Adam’s room  
The head of all mankind, though Adam’s son.  
As in him, perish all men, so in thee,  
As from a second root, shall be restored  
As many as are restored; without thee, none.  
His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit,  
Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce  
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,  
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee  
Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,  
Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,  
And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise  
His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.  
So Heavenly love shall outdo Hellish hate,  
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,  
So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate  
So easily destroyed, and still destroys  
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.  
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume  
Man’s nature, lessen or degrade thine own.  
Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss  
Equal to God, and equally enjoying  
God-like fruition, quitted all to save

'A world from utter loss, and hast been found  
By merit more than birthright Son of God,—  
Found worthiest to be so by being good,  
Far more than great or high; because in thee  
Love hath abounded more than glory abounds;  
Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt  
With thee thy manhood also to this Throne:  
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign  
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,  
Anointed universal King. All power  
I give thee; reign for ever, and assume  
Thy merits; under thee, as Head Supreme,  
Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce:  
All knees to thee shall bow of them that bide  
In Heaven, or Earth, or, under Earth, in Hell.  
When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,  
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send  
The summoning Archangels to proclaim  
Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds  
The living, and forthwith the cited dead  
Of all past ages, to the general doom  
Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.  
Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge  
Bad men and Angels; they arraigned shall sink  
Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,  
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile  
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring  
New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,  
And, after all their tribulations long,  
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,  
With Joy and Love triumph'ing, and fair Truth.  
Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by;  
For regal sceptre then no more shall need;  
God shall be All in All. But all ye Gods,  
Adore Him who, to compass all this, dies;  
Adore the Son, and honour him as me."

No sooner had the Almighty ceased but—all  
The multitude of Angels, with a shout  
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet  
As from blest voices, uttering joy—Heaven rung

With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled  
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent  
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground  
With solemn adoration down they cast  
Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold,—  
Immortal amarant, a flower which once  
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,  
Began to bloom, but, soon for Man's offence  
To Heaven removed where first it grew, there grows  
And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,  
And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven  
Rowls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream!  
With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect  
Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams.  
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright  
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shon,  
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.  
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—  
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side  
Like quivers hung; and with præamble sweet  
Of charming symphony they introduce  
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high:  
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join  
Melodious part; such concord is in Heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,  
Immutable, Immortal. Infinite,  
Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,  
Fountain of light, thyself invisible  
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st  
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st  
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud  
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine  
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,  
Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim  
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.  
Thee next they sang, of all creation first,  
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,  
In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud  
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,  
Whom else no creature can behold: on thee

Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides; . . .  
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.  
He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein,  
By thee created; and by thee threw down  
The aspiring Dominations. Thou that day  
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,  
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook  
Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks  
Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.  
Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim  
Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,  
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes.  
Not so on Man: him, through their malice fallen,  
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom  
So strictly, but much more to pity encline.  
No sooner did thy dear and only Son  
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man  
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,  
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife  
Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,  
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat  
Second to thee, offered himself to die  
For Man's offence. O unexampled love!  
Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!  
Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name  
Shall be the copious matter of my song  
Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise  
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin!  
Thus they in Heaven, above the Starry Sphere,  
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.  
Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe  
Of this round World, whose first convex divides  
The luminous inferior Orbs, enclosed  
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,  
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off  
It seemed; now seems a boundless continent,  
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night  
Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms  
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky,  
Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,

Though distant far, some small reflection gains  
Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud.  
Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field.  
As when a vultur, on Imaus bred,  
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,  
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,  
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids  
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs  
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,  
But in his way lights on the barren plains  
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive  
With sails and wind their cany waggons light;  
So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend  
Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey:  
Alone, for other creature in this place,  
Living or lifeless, to be found was none:—  
None yet; but store hereafter from the Earth  
Up hither like aerial vapours flew  
Of all things transitory and vain, when sin  
With vanity had filled the works of men—  
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things  
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,  
Or happiness in this or the other life.  
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits  
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,  
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find  
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;  
All the unaccomplished works of Nature's hand,  
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,  
Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,  
Till final dissolution, wander here—  
Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some have dreamed:  
Those argent fields more likely habitants,  
Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold,  
Betwixt the angelical and human kind.  
Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,  
First from the ancient world those Giants came,  
With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:  
The builders next of Babel on the plain  
Of Sennaar, and still with vain design



New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:  
Others came single; he who, to be deemed  
A god, leaped fondly into *Ætna* flames,  
*Empedocles*; and he who, to enjoy  
*Plato's Elysium*, leaped into the sea,  
*Cleombrotus*; and many more, too long,  
Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,  
White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.  
Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek  
In *Golgotha* him dead who lives in Heaven;  
And they who, to be sure of Paradise,  
Dying put on the weeds of *Dominic*,  
Or in *Franciscan* think to pass disguised.  
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,  
And that crystal'lin sphere whose balance weighs  
The trepidation talked, and that first moved;  
And now *Saint Peter* at Heaven's wicket seems  
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot  
Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!  
A violent cross wind from either coast  
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry,  
Into the devious air. Then might ye see  
Cows, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost  
And fluttered into rags; then reliques, beads,  
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,  
The sport of winds: all these, upwhirled aloft,  
Fly o'er the backside of the World far off  
Into a Limbo large and broad, since called  
The Paradise of Fools; to few unknown  
Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.  
All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed;  
And long he wandered, till at last a gleam  
Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste  
His travelled steps. Far distant he descries,  
Ascending by degrees magnificent  
Up to the wall of Heaven, a structure high;  
At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared  
The work as of a kingly palace-gate,  
With frontispice of diamond and gold  
Imbellished; thick with sparkling orient gems



The portal shon, inimitable on Earth  
By model, or by shading pencil drawn.  
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw  
Angels ascending and descending, bands  
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled  
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz  
Dreaming by night under the open sky,  
And waking cried, *This is the gate of Heaven*.  
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood  
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes  
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed  
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon  
Who after came from Earth sailing arrived  
Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake  
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.  
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare  
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate  
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:  
Direct against which opened from beneath,  
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,  
A passage down to the Earth—a passage wide;  
Wider by far than that of after-times  
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,  
Over the Promised Land to God so dear,  
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,  
On high behests his Angels to and fro  
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard  
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,  
To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land  
Borders on Ægypt and the Arabian shore.  
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set  
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.  
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,  
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,  
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view  
Of all this World at once. As when a scout,  
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone  
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn  
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,  
Which to his eye discovers unaware

The goodly prospect of some foreign land  
First seen, or some renowned metropolis  
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,  
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams;  
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,  
The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,  
At sight of all this World beheld so fair.  
Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood  
So high above the circling canopy  
Of Night's extended shade) from eastern point  
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears  
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas  
Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole  
He views in breadth,—and, without longer pause,  
Down right into the World's first region throws  
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease  
Through the pure marble air his oblique way  
Amongst innumerable stars, that shon  
Stars distant, but nigh-hand seemed other worlds.  
Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,  
Like those Hesperian Gardens famed of old,  
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales;  
Thrice happy isles! But who dwelt happy there  
He staid not to inquire: above them all  
The golden Sun, in splendour likest Heaven,  
Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends,  
Through the calm firmament (but up or down,  
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,  
Or longitude) where the great luminary,  
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,  
That from the lordly eye keep distance due,  
Dispenses light from far. They, as they move  
Their starry dance in numbers that compute  
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering  
lamp  
Turn swift their various motions, or are turned  
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms  
The Universe, and to each inward part  
With gentle penetration, though unseen,  
Shoots invisible virtue even to the Deep;

So wondrously was set his station bright.  
There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps  
Astronomer in the Sun's lucent orb  
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.  
The place he found beyond expression bright,  
Compared with aught on Earth, metal or stone—  
Not all parts like, but all alike informed  
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.  
If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;  
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,  
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shon  
In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides;  
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen—  
That stone, or like to that, which here below  
Philosophers in vain so long have sought;  
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind  
Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound  
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,  
Drained through a limbec to his native form.  
What wonder then if fields and regions here  
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run  
Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch,  
The arch-chimic Sun, so far from us remote,  
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,  
Here in the dark so many precious things  
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?  
Here matter new to gaze the Devil met  
Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands;  
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,  
But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon  
Culminate from the equator, as they now  
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round  
Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,  
Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray  
To objects distant far, whereby he soon  
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,  
The same whom John saw also in the Sun.  
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid;  
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar  
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind

Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings  
Lay waving round: on some great charge employed  
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.  
Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope  
To find who might direct his wandering flight  
To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,  
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.  
But first he casts to change his proper shape,  
Which else might work him danger or delay:  
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,  
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face  
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb  
Suitable grace diffused; so well he feigned.  
Under a coronet his flowing hair  
In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore  
Of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold;  
His habit fit for speed succinct; and held  
Before his decent steps a silver wand.  
He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,  
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,  
Admonished by his ear, and straight was known  
The Archangel Uriel—one of the seven  
Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,  
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes  
That run through all the Heavens, or down to the  
Earth  
Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,  
O'er sea and land. Him Satan thus accosts:—  
“Uriel! for thou of those seven Spirits that stand  
In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,  
The first art wont his great authentic will  
Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,  
Where all his Sons thy embassy attend,  
And here art likeliest by supreme decree  
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye  
To visit oft this new Creation round—  
Unspeakable desire to see and know  
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly Man,  
His chief delight and favour, him for whom  
All these his works so wondrous he ordained,

Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim  
Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell  
In which of all these shining orbs hath Man  
His fixèd seat—or fixèd seat hath none,  
But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell—  
That I may find him, and with secret gaze  
Or open admiration him behold  
On whom the great Creator hath bestowed  
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured;  
That both in him and all things, as is meet,  
The Universal Maker we may praise;  
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes  
To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,  
Created this new happy race of Men  
To serve him better. Wise are all his ways!”

So spake the false dissembler unperceived;  
For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy—the only evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone,  
By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth;  
And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps  
At Wisdom’s gate, and to Simplicity  
Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill  
Where no ill seems: which now for once beguiled  
Uriel, though Regent of the Sun, and held  
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven;  
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,  
In his uprightness, answer thus returned:—

“Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know  
The works of God, thereby to glorify  
The great Work-maister, leads to no excess  
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise  
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither  
From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,  
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,  
Contented with report, hear only in Heaven:  
For wonderful indeed are all his works,  
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all  
Had in remembrance always with delight!  
But what created mind can comprehend

Their number, or the wisdom infinite  
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?  
I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,  
This World's material mould, came to a heap:  
Confusion heard his voice, and wild Uproar  
Stood ruled, stood vast Infinitude confined;  
Till, at his second bidding, Darkness fled,  
Light shon, and order from disorder sprung.  
Swift to their several quarters hasted then  
The cumbrous elements—Earth, Flood, Air, Fire;  
And this ethereal quint'essence of Heaven  
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,  
That rowled orbicular, and turned to stars  
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move:  
Each had his place appointed, each his course;  
The rest in circuit walls this Universe.  
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side  
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines:  
That place is Earth, the seat of Man; that light  
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,  
Night would invade; but there the neighbouring Moon  
(So call that opposite fair star) her aid  
Timely interposes, and, her monthly round  
Still ending, still renewing, through mid-heaven,  
With borrowed light her countenance triform  
Hence fills and empties, to enlighten the Earth,  
And in her pale dominion checks the night.  
That spot to which I point is Paradise,  
Adam's abode; those lofty shades his bower.  
Thy way thou canst not miss; me mine requires.”  
Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low,  
As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,  
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,  
Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,  
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,  
Throws his steep flight in many an aerie wheel,  
Nor staid till on Niphates' top he lights.



## THE FOURTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions—fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a Cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping: there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who saw  
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,  
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,  
Came furious down to be revenged on men,  
*Woe to the inhabitants on Earth!* that now,  
While time was, our first parents had been warned  
The coming of their secret Foe, and scaped,  
Haply so scaped, his mortal snare! For now  
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,  
The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind,  
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss  
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.  
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold



Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,  
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth  
Now rowling, boils in his tumultuous breast,  
And like a devilish engine back recoils  
Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract  
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir  
The hell within him; for within him Hell  
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell  
One step, no more than from Himself, can fly  
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair  
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory  
Of what he was, what is, and what must be  
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue!  
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view  
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;  
Sometinies towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,  
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:  
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:—  
“O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned,  
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god  
Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminished heads—to thee I call,  
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,  
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,  
That bring to my remembrance from what state  
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,  
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,  
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King!  
Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return  
From me, whom he created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with his good  
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
What could be less than to afford him praise,  
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,  
How due? Yet all his good proved ill in me,  
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,  
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher  
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit  
The debt immense of endless gratitude,  
So burthensome, still paying, still to owe;

Forgetful what from him I still received;  
And understood not that a grateful mind  
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once  
Indebted and discharged—what burden then?  
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained  
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood  
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised  
Ambition. Yet why not? Some other Power  
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,  
Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great  
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within  
Or from without to all temptations armed!  
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?  
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,  
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?  
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,  
To me alike it deals eternal woe.  
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will  
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.  
Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrauth and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;  
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,  
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.  
O, then, at last relent! Is there no place  
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?  
None left but by submission; and that word  
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame  
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced  
With other promises and other vaunts  
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue  
The Omnipotent. Aye me! they little know  
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,  
Under what torments inwardly I groan.  
While they adore me on the throne of Hell,  
With diadem and sceptre high advanced,  
The lower still I fall, only supreme  
In misery: such joy ambition finds!  
But say I could repent, and could obtain,

By act of grace, my former state; how soon  
Would highth recal high thoughts, how soon unsay  
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant  
Vows made in pain, as violent and void  
(For never can true reconcilment grow  
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep)  
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse  
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear  
Short intermission, bought with double smart.  
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far  
From granting he, as I from begging, peace.  
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead  
Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,  
Mankind, created, and for him this World!  
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,  
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;  
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least  
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,  
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;  
As Man ere long, and this new World, shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,  
Thrice changed with pale—ire, envy, and despair;  
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed  
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:  
For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul  
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware  
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,  
Artificer of fraud; and was the first  
That practised falsehood under saintly shew,  
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:  
Yet not enough had practised to deceive  
Uriel, once warned; whose eye pursued him down  
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount  
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall  
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce  
He marked and mad demeanour, then alone,  
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.

So on he fares, and to the border comes  
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,  
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,

As with a rural mound, the champain head  
Of a steep wilderness whose hairy sides  
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
Access denied; and overhead up-grew  
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,  
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,  
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend  
Shade above shade, a woody theatre  
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops  
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung;  
Which to our general Sire gave prospect large  
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.  
And higher than that wall a circling row  
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,  
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,  
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed;  
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams  
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,  
When God hath showered the earth; so lovely seemed  
That lantskip. And of pure now purer air  
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires  
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive  
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay  
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a  
league  
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles;  
So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend  
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased  
Than Asmodæus with the fishy fume  
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse  
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent  
From Media post to Ægypt, there fast bound.  
Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill

Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;  
But further way found none; so thick entwined,  
As one continued brake, the undergrowth  
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed  
All path of man or beast that passed that way.  
One gate there only was, and that looked east  
On the other side. Which when the Arch-Felon saw,  
Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt,  
At one slight bound high overleaped all bound  
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within  
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,  
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,  
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,  
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,  
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;  
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash  
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,  
Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,  
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;  
So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold:  
So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.  
Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,  
The middle tree and highest there that grew,  
Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true life  
Thereby regained, but sat devising death  
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought  
Of that life-giving plant, but only used  
For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge  
Of immortality. So little knows  
Any, but God alone, to value right  
The good before him, but perverts best things  
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.  
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views,  
To all delight of human sense exposed,  
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth; yea, more—  
A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise  
Of God the garden was, by him in the east  
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line  
From Auran eastward to the royal towers  
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,

Or where the sons of Eden long before  
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil  
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.  
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow  
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;  
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,  
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit  
Of vegetable gold; and next to life,  
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by—  
Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill.  
Southward through Eden went a river large,  
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill  
Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown  
That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised  
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins  
Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,  
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill  
Watered the garden; thence united fell  
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,  
Which from his darksome passage now appears,  
And now, divided into four main streams,  
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm  
And country whereof here needs no account;  
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell  
How, from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,  
Rowling on orient pearl and sands of gold,  
With mazy error under pendent shades  
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed  
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art  
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon  
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,  
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote  
The open field, and where the unpierced shade  
Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,  
A happy rural seat of various view:  
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;  
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,  
Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true,  
If true, here only—and of delicious taste.  
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks



Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,  
Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap  
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,  
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.  
Another side, umbrageous grotts and caves  
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine  
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps  
Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall  
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,  
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned  
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.  
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,  
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune  
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,  
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,  
Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field  
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain  
To seek her through the world—nor that sweet grove  
Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired  
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise  
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle,  
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,  
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,  
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,  
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;  
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,  
Mount Amara (though this by some supposed  
True Paradise) under the Ethiop line  
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,  
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote  
From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend  
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind  
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange,  
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
God-like erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,  
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shon,



Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—  
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,  
Whence true authority in men: though both  
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;  
For contemplation he and valour formed,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;  
He for God only, she for God in him.  
His fair large front and eye sublime declared  
Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:  
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,  
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore  
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved  
As the vine curls her tendrils—which implied  
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,  
And by her yielded, by him best received—  
Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride,  
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.  
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;  
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame  
Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable,  
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind  
With shews instead, mere shews of seeming pure,  
And banished from man's life his happiest life,  
Simplicity and spotless innocence!  
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight  
Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill:  
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair  
That ever since in love's embraces met—  
Adam the goodliest man of men since born  
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.  
Under a tuft of shade that on a green  
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,  
They sat them down; and, after no more toil  
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed  
To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease  
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite  
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—  
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs

Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline  
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.  
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,  
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;  
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles  
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems  
Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,  
Alone as they. About them frisking played  
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase  
In wood or wilderness, forest or den,  
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw  
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,  
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,  
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed  
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,  
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine  
His breasted train, and of his fatal guile  
Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass  
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,  
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,  
Declined, was hastening now with prone career  
To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale  
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:  
When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,  
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:—  
“O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?  
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced  
Creatures of other mould—Earth-born perhaps,  
Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright  
Little inferior—whom my thoughts pursue  
With wonder, and could love; so lively shines  
In them divine resemblance, and such grace  
The hand that formed them on their shape hath  
poured.  
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh  
Your change approaches, when all these delights  
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe—  
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:  
Happy, but for so happy ill secured  
Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,

Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe  
As now is entered; yet no purposed foe  
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,  
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,  
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,  
That I with you must dwell, or you with me,  
Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,  
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such  
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,  
Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,  
To entertain you two, her widest gates,  
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,  
Not like these narrow limits, to receive  
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,  
Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge  
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.  
And, should I at your harmless innocence  
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just—  
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged  
By conquering this new World—compels me now  
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.”

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,  
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.  
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree  
Down he alights among the sportful herd  
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,  
Now other, as their shape served best his end  
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,  
To mark what of their state he more might learn  
By word or action marked. About them round  
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;  
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied  
In some pourlieu two gentle fawns at play,  
Straight crouches close; then rising, changes oft  
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,  
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both  
Griped in each paw: when Adam, first of men,  
To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,  
Turned him all ear to hear new utterance flow:—

“Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,

Dearer thyself than all, needs must the Power  
That made us, and for us this ample World,  
Be infinitely good, and of his good  
As liberal and free as infinite;  
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here  
In all this happiness, who at this hand  
Have nothing merited, nor can perform  
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires  
From us no other service than to keep  
This one, this easy charge—of all the trees  
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit  
So various, not to taste that only Tree  
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;  
So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is—  
Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st  
God hath pronounced it Death to taste that Tree:  
The only sign of our obedience left  
Among so many signs of power and rule  
Conferred upon us, and dominion given  
Over all other creatures that possess  
Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard  
One easy prohibition, who enjoy  
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice  
Unlimited of manifold delights;  
But let us ever praise him, and extol  
His bounty, following our delightful task,  
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;  
Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied:—"O thou for whom  
And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,  
And without whom am to no end, my guide  
And head! what thou hast said is just and right.  
For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,  
And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy  
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee  
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou  
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.  
That day I oft remember, when from sleep  
I first awaked, and found myself reposed,  
Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where

And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.  
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound  
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread  
Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,  
Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went  
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down  
On the green bank, to look into the clear  
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.  
As I bent down to look, just opposite  
A Shape within the watery gleam appeared,  
Bending to look on me. I started back,  
It started back; but pleased I soon returned,  
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks  
Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed  
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,  
Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,  
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;  
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,  
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays  
Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces—he  
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy  
Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear  
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called  
Mother of human race.' What could I do,  
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?  
Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,  
Under a platan; yet methought less fair,  
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,  
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned;  
Thou, following, cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve;  
Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,  
His flesh, his bone, to give thee being I lent  
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,  
Substantial life, to have thee by my side  
Henceforth an individual solace dear:  
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim  
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand  
Seized mine: I yielded, and from that time see  
How beauty is excelled by manly grace  
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general mother, and, with eyes  
Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,  
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned  
On our first father; half her swelling breast  
Naked met his, under the flowing gold  
Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight  
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,  
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter  
On Juno smiles when he impregns the clouds  
That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip  
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned  
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign  
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:—  
“Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,  
Imparadised in one another’s arms,  
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill  
Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,  
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,  
Among our other torments not the least,  
Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!  
Yet let me not forget what I have gained  
From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems;  
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,  
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?  
Suspicious, reasonless! Why should their Lord  
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?  
Can it be death? And do they only stand  
By ignorance? Is that their happy state,  
The proof of their obedience and their faith?  
O fair foundation laid whereon to build  
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds  
With more desire to know, and to reject  
Envious commands, invented with design  
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt  
Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,  
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue?  
But first with narrow search I must walk round  
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;  
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet  
Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by fountain-side,



Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw  
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,  
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,  
Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed!"

So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,  
But with sly circumspection, and began  
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his  
    roam.

Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heaven  
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun  
Slowly descended, and with right aspect  
Against the eastern gate of Paradise  
Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock  
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,  
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent  
Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;  
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung  
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.  
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,  
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;  
About him exercised heroic games  
The unarmed youth of Heaven; but nigh at hand  
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,  
Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold.  
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even  
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star  
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired  
Impress the air, and shews the mariner  
From what point of his compass to beware  
Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste:—

"Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given  
Charge and strict watch that to this happy place  
No evil thing approach or enter in.  
This day at highth of noon came to my sphere  
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know  
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,  
God's latest image. I described his way  
Bent all on speed, and marked his aerie gait,  
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,  
Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks



Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.  
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade  
Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,  
I fear, hath ventured from the Deep, to raise  
New troubles; him thy care must be to find."

To whom the wingèd Warrior thus returned:—  
"Uriel, no wonder if thy perfet sight,  
Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,  
See far and wide. In at this gate none pass  
The vigilance here placed, but such as come  
Well known from Heaven; since meridian hour  
No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,  
So minded, have o'erleaped these earthly bounds  
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude  
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.  
But, if within the circuit of these walks,  
In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom  
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."

So promised he; and Uriel to his charge  
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now  
raised

Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen  
Beneath the Azores; whether the Prime Orb,  
Incredible how swift, had thither rowled  
Diurnal, or this less volúbil Earth,  
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there  
Arraying with reflected purple and gold  
The clouds that on his western throne attend.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray  
Had in her sober livery all things clad;  
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,  
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests  
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.  
She all night long her amorous descant sung:  
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament  
With living Saphirs; Hesperus, that led  
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length  
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,  
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw;

When Adam thus to Eve:—"Fair consort, the hour  
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,  
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set  
Labour and rest, as day and night, to men  
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,  
Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines  
Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long  
Rove idle, unimployed, and less need rest;  
Man hath his daily work of body or mind  
Appointed, which declares his dignity,  
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;  
While other animals unactive range,  
And of their doings God takes no account.  
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east  
With first approach of light, we must be risen,  
And at our pleasant labour, to reform  
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,  
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,  
That mock our scant manuring, and require  
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth.  
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,  
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,  
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.  
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:—  
"My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st  
Unargued I obey. So God ordains:  
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more  
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.  
With thee conversing, I forget all time,  
All seasons, and their change; all please alike.  
Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,  
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,  
When first on this delightful land he spreads  
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth  
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on  
Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,  
With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon  
And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train

But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends  
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun  
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,  
Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;  
Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night,  
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,  
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.  
But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom  
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied:—  
"Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,  
Those have their course to finish round the Earth  
By morrow evening, and from land to land  
In order, though to nations yet unborn,  
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;  
Lest total Darkness should by night regain  
Her old possession, and extinguish life  
In nature and all things; which these soft fires  
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat  
Of various influence foment and warm,  
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down  
Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow  
On Earth, made hereby apter to receive  
Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.  
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,  
Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none,  
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise.  
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth  
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:  
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold  
Both day and night. How often, from the steep  
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard  
Celestial voices to the midnight air,  
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,  
Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands  
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,  
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds  
In full harmonic number joined, their songs  
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed

On to their blissful bower. It was a place  
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed  
All things to Man's delightful use. The roof  
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,  
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew  
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side  
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,  
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,  
Iris all hues, roses, and gessamin,  
Reared high their flourished heads between, and  
wrought  
Mosaic; under foot the violet,  
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay  
Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone  
Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,  
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none;  
Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower  
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,  
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph  
For Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,  
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling hearbs  
Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed,  
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,  
What day the genial Angel to our Sire  
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,  
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods  
Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like  
In sad event, when, to the unwiser son  
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared  
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged  
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood  
Both turned, and under open sky adored  
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heaven,  
Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent globe,  
And starry Pole:—"Thou also madest the Night,  
Maker Omnipotent; and thou the Day,  
Which we, in our appointed work employed,  
Have finished, happy in our mutual help  
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss

Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,  
For us too large, where thy abundance wants  
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.  
But thou hast promised from us two a race  
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol  
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,  
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites  
Observing none, but adoration pure,  
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower  
Handed they went, and, eased the putting-off  
These troublesome disguises which we wear,  
Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween,  
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites  
Mysterious of connubial love refused:  
Whatever hypocrites austere talk  
Of purity, and place, and innocence,  
Defaming as impure what God declares  
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.  
Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain  
But our destroyer, foe to God and Man?  
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source  
Of human offspring, sole propriety  
In Paradise of all things common else!  
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men  
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,  
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,  
Relations dear, and all the charities  
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.  
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,  
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,  
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,  
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,  
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.  
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,  
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile  
Of harlots—loveless, joyless, unindeared,  
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,  
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight bal,

Or serenate, which the starved lover sings  
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.  
These, lulled by nightingales, imbracing slept,  
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof  
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,  
Blest pair! and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek  
No happier state, and know to know no more!

Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone  
Half-way up-hill this vast sublunar vault,  
And from their ivory port the Cherubim  
Forth issuing, at the accustomed hour, stood armed  
To their night-watches in warlike parade;  
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:—

“Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south  
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:  
Our circuit meets full west.” As flame they part,  
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.  
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called  
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:—

“Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed  
Search through this Garden; leave unsearched no  
nook;

But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,  
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.  
This evening from the Sun’s decline arrived  
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen  
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?), escaped  
The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt:  
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.”

So saying, on he led his radiant files,  
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct  
In search of whom they sought. Him there they found  
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,  
Assaying by his devilish art to reach  
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge  
Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams;  
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint  
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise  
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise,  
At least distempered, discontented thoughts,



Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,  
Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.  
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear  
Touched lightly; for no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,  
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark  
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid  
Fit for the tun, some magazin to store  
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,  
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;  
So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.  
Back stept those two fair Angels, half amazed  
So sudden to behold the griesly King;  
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:—

“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell  
Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,  
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,  
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?”

“Know ye not, then,” said Satan, filled with scorn,  
“Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate  
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar!  
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,  
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,  
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin  
Your message, like to end as much in vain?”

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with  
scorn:—

“Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,  
Or undiminished brightness, to be known  
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure.  
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,  
Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now  
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.  
But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account  
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep  
This place inviolable, and these from harm.”

So spake the Cherub; and his grave rebuke,  
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace  
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,



And felt how awful goodness is, and saw  
Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw, and pined  
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed  
His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed  
Undaunted. “If I must contend,” said he,  
“Best with the best—the sender, not the sent;  
Or all at once: more glory will be won,  
Or less be lost.” “Thy fear,” said Zephon bold,  
“Will save us trial what the least can do  
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.”

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;  
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,  
Chaumping his iron curb. To strive or fly  
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled  
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh  
The western point, where those half-rounding guards  
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,  
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,  
Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:—

“O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet  
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern  
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;  
And with them comes a third, of regal port,  
But faded splendour wan, who by his gait  
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell—  
Not likely to part hence without contest’.  
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.”

He scarce had ended, when those two approached,  
And brief related whom they brought, where found,  
How busied, in what form and posture couched.  
To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake:—  
“Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed  
To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge  
Of others, who approve not to transgress  
By thy example, but have power and right  
To question thy bold entrance on this place;  
Implored, it seems, to violate sleep, and those  
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?”

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:—  
“Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise;

And such I held thee; but this question asked  
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?  
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,  
Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no  
doubt,

And boldly venture to whatever place  
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change  
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense  
Dole with delight; which in this place I sought:  
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,  
But evil hast not tried. And wilt object  
His will who bound us? Let him surer bar  
His iron gates, if he intends our stay  
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked:  
The rest is true; they found me where they say;  
But that implies not violence or harm."

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved,  
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:—  
"O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,  
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,  
And now returns him from his prison scaped,  
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise  
Or not who ask what boldness brought him hither  
Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed!  
So wise he judges it to fly from pain  
However, and to scape his punishment!  
So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath,  
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight  
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,  
Which taught thee yet no better that no pain  
Can equal anger infinite provoked.  
But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee  
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them  
Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they  
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief,  
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged  
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,  
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning  
stern:—

“Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,  
Insulting Angel! well thou know’st I stood  
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid  
The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed  
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.  
But still thy words at random, as before,  
Argue thy inexperience what behoves,  
From hard assays and ill successes past,  
A faithful leader—not to hazard all  
Through ways of danger by himself untried.  
I, therefore, I alone, first undertook  
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy  
This new-created World, whereof in Hell  
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find  
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers  
To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air;  
Though for possession put to try once more  
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;  
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord  
High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,  
And practised distances to cringe, not fight.”

To whom the Warrior-Angel soon replied:—  
“To say and straight unsay, pretending first  
Wise to fly pain, professing next to spy,  
Argues no leader, but a liar traced,  
Satan; and couldst thou ‘faithful’ add? O name,  
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!  
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?  
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!  
Was this your discipline and faith ingaged,  
Your military obedience, to dissolve  
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme?  
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem  
Patron of liberty, who more than thou  
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored  
Heaven’s awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope  
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?  
But mark what I areed thee now: Avaunt!  
Fly thither whence thou fledd’st. If from this hour  
Within these hallowed limits thou appear,

Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,  
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn  
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats  
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage, replied:—

"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,  
Proud liminary Cherub! but ere then  
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel  
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King  
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy Compeers,  
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels  
In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved."

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright  
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns  
Their phalanx and began to hem him round  
With ported spears, as thick as when a field  
Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends  
Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind  
Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands  
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves  
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,  
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,  
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:  
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest  
Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp  
What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful  
deeds

Might have ensued; nor only Paradise,  
In this commotion, but the starry cope  
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the Elements  
At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn  
With violence of this conflict, had not soon  
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,  
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen  
Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign,  
Wherein all things created first he weighed,  
The pendulous round Earth with balanced air  
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,  
Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,  
The sequel each of parting and of fight:

The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam;  
Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend:—

“Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know’st  
mine,

Neither our own, but given; what folly then  
To boast what arms can do! since thine no more  
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now  
To trample thee as mire. For proof look up,  
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,  
Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how  
weak

If thou resist.” The Fiend looked up, and knew  
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled  
Murmuring; and with him fled the shades of Night.

## THE FIFTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve; their discourse at table. Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam’s request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime  
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,  
When Adam waked, so customed; for his sleep  
Was aerie light, from pure digestion bred,  
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound  
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora’s fan,

Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song  
Of birds on every bough. So much the more  
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve,  
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,  
As through unquiet rest. He, on his side  
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love  
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld  
Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,  
Shot forth peculiar graces; then, with voice  
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,  
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus:—"Awake,  
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,  
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight!  
Awake! the morning shines, and the fresh field  
Calls us; we lose the prime to mark how spring  
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,  
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,  
How Nature paints her colours, how the bee  
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye  
On Adam; whom imbracing, thus she spake:—

"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,  
My glory, my perfection! glad I see  
Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night  
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,  
If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,  
Works of day past, or morrow's next design;  
But of offence and trouble, which my mind  
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought  
Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk  
With gentle voice; I thought it thine. It said,  
'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,  
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields  
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake  
Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song; now reigns  
Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,  
Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,  
If none regard. Heaven wakes with all his eyes;  
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire,  
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment



Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze?"  
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not:  
To find thee I directed then my walk;  
And on, methought, alone I passed through ways  
That brought me on a sudden to the Tree  
Of interdicted Knowledge. Fair it seemed,  
Much fairer to my fancy than by day;  
And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood  
One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven  
By us oft seen: his dewy locks distilled  
Ambrosia. On that Tree he also gazed;  
And, 'O fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged,  
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,  
Nor God nor Man? Is knowledge so despised?  
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?  
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold  
Longer thy offered good, why else set here?'  
This said, he paused not, but with ventrous arm  
He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled  
At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold;  
But he thus, overjoyed: 'O fruit divine,  
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus crompt,  
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit  
For gods, yet able to make gods of men!  
And why not gods of men, since good, the more  
Communicated, more abundant grows,  
The author not impaired, but honoured more?  
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve!  
Partake thou also: happy though thou art,  
Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.  
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods  
Thyself a goddess; not to Earth confined,  
But sometimes in the Air, as we; sometimes  
Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see  
What life the gods live there, and such live thou.'  
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,  
Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part  
Which he had plucked: the pleasant savoury smell  
So quickened appetite that I, methought,  
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds



With him I flew, and underneath beheld  
The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide  
And various. Wondering at my flight and change  
To this high exaltation, suddenly  
My guide was gone, and I; methought, sunk down,  
And fell asleep; but, O, how glad I waked  
To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night  
Related, and thus Adam answered sad:—

"Best image of myself, and dearer half,  
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep  
Affects me equally; nor can I like  
This uncouth dream—of evil sprung, I fear;  
Yet evil whence? In thee can harbour none,  
Created pure. But know that in the soul  
Are many lesser faculties, that serve  
Reason as chief. Among these Fancy next  
Her office holds; of all external things,  
Which the five watchful senses represent,  
She forms imaginations, aerie shapes,  
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames  
All what we affirm or what deny, and call  
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires  
Into her private cell when Nature rests.  
Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes  
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,  
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,  
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.  
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find  
Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream,  
But with addition strange. Yet be not sad:  
Evil into the mind of God or Man  
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave  
No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope  
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream  
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.  
Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks,  
That wont to be more cheerful and serene  
Than when fair Morning first smiles on the world;  
And let us to our fresh employments rise  
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,

That open now their choicest bosomed smells,  
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheered he his fair spouse; and she was cheered,  
But silently a gentle tear let fall  
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair:  
Two other precious drops that ready stood,  
Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,  
Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse  
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.  
But first, from under shady arborous roof  
Soon as they forth were come to open sight  
Of day-spring, and the Sun—who, scarce uprisen,  
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,  
Shot parallel to the Earth his dewy ray,  
Discovering in wide lantskip all the east  
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains—  
Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began  
Their orisons, each morning duly paid  
In various style; for neither various style  
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise  
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung  
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence  
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,  
More tuneable than needed lute or harp  
To add more sweetness. And they thus began:—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty! thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then!  
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.  
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light,  
Angels—for ye behold him, and with songs  
And choral symphonies, day without night,  
Circle his throne rejoicing—ye in Heaven;  
On Earth join, all ye creatures, to extol  
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.  
Fairest of Stars, last in the train of Night,

If better thou belong not to the Dawn,  
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn  
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere  
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.  
Thou Sun, of this great World both eye and soul,  
Acknowledge him thy Greater; sound his praise  
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,  
And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.  
Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fliest,  
With the fixed Stars, fixed in their orb that flies;  
And ye five other wandering Fires, that move  
In mystic dance, not without song, resound  
His praise who out of Darkness called up Light.  
Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth  
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run  
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix  
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change  
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.  
Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise  
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,  
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,  
In honour to the World's great Author rise;  
Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,  
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,  
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.  
His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow,  
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pines,  
With every Plant, in sign of worship wave.  
Fountains, and ye, that warble, as ye flow,  
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.  
Join voices, all ye living Souls. Ye Birds,  
That, singing, up to Heaven-gate ascend,  
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.  
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk  
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,  
Witness if *I* be silent, morn or even,  
To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,  
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.  
Hail, universal Lord! Be bounteous still  
To give us only good; and, if the night

Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,  
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts  
Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm.  
On to their morning's rural work they haste,  
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row  
Of fruit-trees, over-woody, reached too far  
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check  
Fruitless imbraces; or they led the vine  
To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines  
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings  
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn  
His barren leaves. Them thus imployed beheld  
With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called  
Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deigned  
To travel with Tobias, and secured  
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.

"Raphael," said he, "thou hear'st what stir on Earth  
Satan, from Hell scaped through the darksome Gulf,  
Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed  
This night the human pair; now he designs  
In them at once to ruin all mankind.  
Go, therefore; half this day, as friend with friend,  
Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade  
Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired  
To respite his day-labour with repast  
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on  
As may advise him of his happy state—  
Happiness in his power left free to will,  
Left to his own free will, his will though free  
Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware  
He swerve not, too secure: tell him withal  
His danger, and from whom; what enemy,  
Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now  
The fall of others from like state of bliss.  
By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;  
But by deceit and lies. This let him know,  
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend  
Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned."

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled

All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint  
After his charge received; but from among  
Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood  
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light,  
Flew through the midst of Heaven. The angelic quires,  
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way  
Through all the empyreal road, till, at the gate  
Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide,  
On golden hinges turning, as by work  
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.  
From hence—no cloud or, to obstruct his sight,  
Star interposed, however small—he sees,  
Not unconform to other shining globes,  
Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned  
Above all hills; as when by night the glass  
Of Galileo, less assured, observes  
Imagined lands and regions in the Moon;  
Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades  
Delos or Samos first appearing kens,  
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight  
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky  
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing  
Now on the polar winds; then with quick fan  
Winnows the buxom air, till, within soar  
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems  
A phoenix, gazed by all, as that sole bird,  
When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's  
Bright temple, to Ægyptian Thebes he flies.  
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise  
He lights, and to his proper shape returns,  
A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore, to shade  
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad  
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast  
With regal ornament; the middle pair  
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round  
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold  
And colours dipt in heaven; the third his feet  
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,  
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,  
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled

The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands  
Of Angels under watch, and to his state  
And to his message high in honour rise;  
For on some message high they guessed him bound.  
Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come  
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,  
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,  
A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here  
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will  
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,  
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.  
Him, through the spicy forest onward come,  
Adam discerned, as in the door he sat  
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted Sun  
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm  
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs;  
And Eve, within, due at her hour, prepared  
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please  
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst  
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,  
Berry or grape: to whom thus Adam called:—

“Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold  
Eastward among those trees what glorious Shape  
Comes this was moving; seems another morn  
Risen on mid-noon. Some great behest from Heaven  
To us perhaps he brings, and will voutsafe  
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,  
And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour  
Abundance fit to honour and receive  
Our heavenly stranger; well may we afford  
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow  
From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies  
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows  
More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare.”

To whom thus Eve:—“Adam, Earth's hallowed  
mould,  
Of God inspired, small store will serve where store,  
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;  
Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains  
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes.



But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,  
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice  
To entertain our Angel-guest as he,  
Beholding, shall confess that here on Earth  
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven."

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste  
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent  
What choice to choose for delicacy best,  
What order so contrived as not to mix  
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring  
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change:  
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk  
Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields  
In India East or West, or middle shore  
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where  
Alcinöus reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat  
Rough or smooth-rined, or bearded husk, or shell,  
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board  
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape  
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths  
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed  
She tempers dulcet creams—nor those to hold  
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground  
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet  
His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train  
Accompanied than with his own complete  
Perfections; in himself was all his state,  
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits  
On princes, when their rich retin'ue long  
Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold  
Dazzles the crowd and sets them all agape.  
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,  
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,  
As to a superior nature, bowing low,  
Thus said:—"Native of Heaven (for other place  
None can than Heaven such glorious Shape contain),  
Since, by descending from the Thrones above,  
Those happy places thou hadst deigned a while  
To want, and honour these, voutsafe with us,



Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess  
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower  
To rest, and what the Garden choicest bears  
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat  
Be over, and the sun more cool decline."

Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild:—  
"Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such  
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,  
As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,  
To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bower  
O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,  
I have at will." So to the sylvan lodge  
They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,  
With flowerets decked and fragrant smells. But Eve,  
Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair  
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned  
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,  
Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil  
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm  
Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel "Hail!"  
Bestowed—the holy salutation used  
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:—

"Hail! Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb  
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons  
Than with these various fruits the trees of God  
Have heaped this table!" Raised of grassy turf  
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,  
And on her ample square, from side to side,  
All Autumn piled, though Spring and Autumn here  
Danced hand-in-hand. A while discourse they hold—  
No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began  
Our Author:—"Heavenly Stranger, please to taste  
These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom  
All perfit good, unmeasured-out, descends.  
To us for food and for delight hath caused  
The Earth to yield: unsavoury food, perhaps,  
To Spiritual Natures; only this I know,  
That one Celestial Father gives to all."

To whom the Angel:—"Therefore, what he gives  
(Whose praise be ever sung) to Man, in part

Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found  
No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure  
Intelligential substances require  
As doth your Rational; and both contain  
Within them every lower faculty  
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,  
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,  
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.  
For know, whatever was created needs  
To be sustained and fed. Of Elements  
The grosser feeds the purer: Earth the Sea;  
Earth and the Sea feed Air; the Air those Fires  
Ethereal, and, as lowest, first the Moon;  
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged,  
Vapours not yet into her substance turned.  
Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale  
From her moist continent to higher Orbs.  
The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives  
From all his alimental recompense  
In humid exhalations, and at even  
Sups with the Ocean. Though in Heaven the trees  
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines  
Yield nectar—though from off the boughs each morn  
We brush mellifluous dewes and find the ground  
Covered with pearly grain—yet God hath here  
Varied his bounty so with new delights  
As may compare with Heaven; and to taste  
Think not I shall be nice.” So down they sat,  
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly  
The Angel, nor in mist—the common gloss  
Of theologians—but with keen dispatch  
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat  
To transubstantiate: what redounds transpires  
Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder, if by fire  
Of sooty coal the Empiric Alchemist  
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,  
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,  
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve  
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups  
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence

Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,  
Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been  
Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts  
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy  
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,  
Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose  
In Adam not to let the occasion pass,  
Given him by this great conference, to know  
Of things above his world, and of their being  
Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw  
Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,  
Divine effulgence, whose high power so far  
Exceeded human; and his wary speech  
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:—

“Inhabitant with God, now know I well  
Thy favour, in this honour done to Man;  
Under whose lowly roof thou hast voutsafed  
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,  
Food not of Angels, yet accepted so  
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem  
At Heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what  
compare!”

To whom the wingèd Hierarch replied:—  
“O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
All things proceed, and up to him return,  
If not depraved from good, created all  
Such to perfection; one first matter all,  
Indued with various forms, various degrees  
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;  
But more refined, more spiritous and pure,  
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending  
Each in their several active spheres assigned,  
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root  
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
More aerie, last the bright consummate flower  
Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,  
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,  
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,

To intellectual; give both life and sense,  
Fancy and understanding; whence the Soul  
Reason receives, and Reason is her being,  
Discursive, or Intuitive: Discourse  
Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,  
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.  
Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good  
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,  
To proper substance. Time may come when Men  
With Angels may participate, and find  
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;  
And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,  
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend  
Ethereal, as we, or may at choice  
Here or in heavenly paradises dwell,  
If ye be found obedient, and retain  
Unalterably firm his love entire  
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy,  
Your fill, what happiness this happy state  
Can comprehend, incapable of more."

To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied:—  
"O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,  
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct  
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set  
From centre to circumference, whereon,  
In contemplation of created things,  
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,  
What meant that caution joined, *If ye be found  
Obedient?* Can we want obedience, then,  
To him, or possibly his love desert,  
Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here  
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss  
Human desires can seek or apprehend?"

To whom the Angel:—"Son of Heaven and Earth,  
Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God;  
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,  
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.  
This was that caution given thee; be advised.  
God made thee perfect, not immutable;

And good he made thee; but to persevere  
He left it in thy power—ordained thy will  
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate  
Inextricable, or strict necessity.  
Our voluntary service he requires,  
Not our necessitated. Such with him  
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how  
Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve  
Willing or no, who will but what they must  
By destiny, and can no other choose?  
Myself, and all the Angelic Host, that stand  
In sight of God enthroned, our happy state  
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds.  
On other surety none: freely we serve,  
Because we freely love, as in our will  
To love or not; in this we stand or fall.  
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,  
And so from Heaven to deepest Hell. O fall  
From what high state of bliss into what woe!”

To whom our great Progenitor:—“Thy words  
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,  
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when  
Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills  
Aërial music send. Nor knew I not  
To be, both will and deed, created free.  
Yet that we never shall forget to love  
Our Maker, and obey him whose command  
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts  
Assured me, and still assure; though what thou tell’st  
Hath passed in Heaven some doubt within me move,  
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,  
The full relation, which must needs be strange,  
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard.  
And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun  
Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins  
His other half in the great zone of heaven.”

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,  
After short pause assenting, thus began:—  
“High matter thou injoin’st me, O prime of Men—  
Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate

To human sense the invisible exploits  
Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,  
The ruin of so many, glorious once  
And perfet while they stood? how, last, unfold  
The secrets of another world, perhaps  
Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good  
This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach  
Of human sense I shall delineate so,  
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,  
As may express them best—though what if Earth  
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein  
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought!

“As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild  
Reigned where these heavens now rowl, where Earth  
now rests

Upon her centre poised, when on a day  
(For Time, though in Eternity, applied  
To motion, measures all things durable  
By present, past, and future), on such day  
As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host  
Of Angels, by imperial summons called,  
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne  
Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared  
Under their hierarchs in orders bright.  
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,  
Standards and gonfalons, 'twixt van and rear  
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve  
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;  
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed  
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love  
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs  
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,  
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,  
By whom in bliss imbosomed sat the Son,  
Amidst, as from a flaming Mount, whose top  
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:

“Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,  
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand!  
This day I have begot whom I declare



My only Son, and on this holy hill  
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,  
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow  
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him **Lord**.  
Under his great vicerent reign abide,  
United as one individual soul,  
For ever happy. Him who disobeys  
Me disobeys, breaks union, and, that day,  
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls  
Into utter darkness, deep ingulfed, his place  
Ordained without redemption, without end.'

"So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words  
All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all.  
That day, as other solemn days, they spent  
In song and dance about the sacred Hill—  
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere  
Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels  
Resembles nearest; mazes intricate,  
Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular  
Then most when most irregular they seem;  
And in their motions harmony divine  
So smooths her charming tones that God's own ear  
Listens delighted. Evening now approached  
(For we have also our evening and our morn—  
We ours for change delectable, not need);  
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn  
Desirous: all in circles as they stood,  
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled  
With Angels' food; and rubied nectar flows  
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,  
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.  
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,  
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet  
Quaff immortality and joy, secure  
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds  
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered  
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.  
Now when ambrosial Night, with clouds exhaled  
From that high mount of God whence light and shade



Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed  
To grateful twilight (for Night comes not there  
In darker veil), and roseate dews disposed  
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest,  
Wide over all the plain, and wider far  
Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread  
(Such are the Courts of God), the Angelic throng,  
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend  
By living streams among the trees of life—  
Pavilions numberless and sudden reared,  
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept,  
Fanned with cool winds; save those who, in their course  
Melodious hymns about the sovran Throne  
Alternate all night long. But not so waked  
Satan—so call him now; his former name  
Is heard no more in Heaven. He, of the first,  
If not the first Archangel, great in power,  
In favour, and preëminence, yet fraught  
With envy against the Son of God, that day  
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed  
Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,  
Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.  
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,  
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour  
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved  
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave  
Unworshiped, unobeyed, the Throne supreme,  
Contemptuous, and, his next subordinate  
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:—  
“Sleep'st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close  
Thy eyelids? and rememberest what decree,  
Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips  
Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts  
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;  
Both waking we were one; how, then, can now  
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;  
New laws from him who reigns new minds may raise  
In us who serve—new counsels, to debate  
What doubtful may ensue. More in this place  
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou

Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;  
Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim Night  
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,  
And all who under me their banners wave,  
Homeward with flying march where we possess  
The Quarters of the North, there to prepare  
Fit entertainment to receive our King,  
The great Messiah, and his new commands,  
Who speedily through all the Hierarchies  
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'

"So spake the false Archangel, and infused  
Bad influence into the unwary breast  
Of his associate. He together calls,  
Or several one by one, the regent Powers,  
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,  
That, the Most High commanding, now ere Night,  
Now ere dim Night had disincumbered Heaven,  
The great hierarchal standard was to move;  
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between  
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound  
Or taint integrity. But all obeyed  
The wonted signal, and superior voice  
Of their great Potentate; for great indeed  
His name, and high was his degree in Heaven:  
His countenance, as the morning-star that guides  
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies  
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host.  
Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns  
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy Mount,  
And from within the golden Lamps that burn  
Nightly before him, saw without their light  
Rebellion rising—saw in whom, how spread  
Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes  
Were banded to oppose his high decree;  
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:—

"'Son, thou in whom my glory I behold  
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,  
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure  
Of our Omnipotence, and with what arms  
We mean to hold what anciently we claim

Of deity or empire: such a foe  
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne  
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;  
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try  
In battle what our power is or our right.  
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw  
With speed what force is left, and all imploy  
In our defence, lest unawares we lose  
This our high place, our Sanctuary, our Hill.'

"To whom the Son, with calm aspect' and clear  
Lightening divine, ineffable, serene,  
Made answer:—'Mighty Father, thou thy foes  
Justly hast in derision, and secure  
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain—  
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate  
Illustrates, when they see all regal power  
Given me to quell their pride, and in event  
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue  
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.'

"So spake the Son; but Satan with his Powers  
Far was advanced on wingèd speed, an host  
Innumerable as the stars of night,  
Or stars of morning, dew-drops which the sun  
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.  
Regions they passed, the mighty regencies  
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones  
In their triple degrees—regions to which  
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more  
Than what this garden is to all the earth  
And all the sea, from one entire globose  
Stretched into longitude; which having passed,  
At length into the limits of the North  
They came, and Satan to his royal seat  
High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount  
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers  
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold—  
The palace of great Lucifer (so call  
That structure, in the dialect of men  
Interpreted) which, not long after, he,  
Affecting all equality with God,

In imitation of that mount whereon  
Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,  
The Mountain of the Congregation called;  
For thither he assembled all his train,  
Pretending so commanded to consult  
About the great reception of their King  
Thither to come, and with calumnious art  
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:—

“ ‘ Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,  
Powers—

If these magnific titles yet remain  
Not merely titular, since by decree  
Another now hath to himself ingrossed  
All power, and us eclipsed under the name  
Of King Anointed; for whom all this haste  
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,  
This only to consult, how we may best,  
With what may be devised of honours new,  
Receive him coming to receive from us  
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!  
Too much to one! but double how endured—  
To one and to his image now proclaimed?  
But what if better counsels might erect  
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke!  
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend  
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust  
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves  
Natives and Sons of Heaven possessed before  
By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,  
Equally free; for orders and degrees  
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.  
Who can in reason, then, or right, assume  
Monarchy over such as live by right  
His equals—if in power and splendour less,  
In freedom equal? or can introduce  
Law and edict on us, who without law  
Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,  
And look for adoration, to the abuse  
Of those imperial titles which assert  
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve!’

“Thus far his bold discourse without control  
Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,  
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored  
The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,  
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe  
The current of his fury thus opposed:—

“‘O argument blasphemous, false, and proud—  
Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven  
Expected; least of all from thee, ingrate,  
In place thyself so high above thy peers!  
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn  
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,  
That to his only Son, by right endued  
With regal sceptre, every soul in Heaven  
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due  
Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,  
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,  
And equal over equals to let reign,  
One over all with unsucceeded power!  
Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute  
With Him the points of liberty, who made  
Thee what Thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven  
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?  
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,  
And of our good and of our dignity  
How provident, he is—how far from thought  
To make us less; bent rather to exalt  
Our happy state, under one Head more near  
United. But—to grant it thee unjust  
That equal over equals monarch reign—  
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,  
Or all angelic nature joined in one,  
Equal to him, begotten Son, by whom,  
As by his Word, the mighty Father made  
All things, even thee, and all the Spirits of Heaven  
By him created in their bright degrees,  
Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named  
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers?—  
Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscured,  
But more illustrious made; since he, the head,

One of our number thus reduced becomes;  
His laws our laws; all honour to him done  
Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage,  
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease  
The incensèd Father and the incensèd Son  
While pardon may be found, in time besought.'

"So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal  
None seconded, as out of season judged,  
Or singular and rash. Whereat rejoiced  
The Apostat, and, more haughty, thus replied:—

"'That we were formed, then, say'st thou? and the  
work

Of secondary hands, by task transferred  
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!  
Doctrine which we would know whence learned! Who  
saw

When this creation was? Remember'st thou  
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?  
We know no time when we were not as now;  
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised  
By our own quickening power when fatal course  
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature  
Of this our native Heaven, Ethereal Sons.  
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand  
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try  
Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold  
Whether by supplication we intend  
Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne  
Beseeching or besieging. This report,  
These tidings, carry to the Anointed King;  
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'

"He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,  
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause  
Through the infinite Host. Nor less for that  
The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone,  
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:—

"'O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,  
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall  
Determined, and thy hapless crew involved  
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread



Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth  
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke  
Of God's Messiah. Those indulgent laws  
Will not be now voutsafed; other decrees  
Against thee are gone forth without recall;  
That golden sceptre which thou didst reject  
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break  
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise;  
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly  
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrauth  
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,  
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel  
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.  
Then who created thee lamenting learn  
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.'  
"So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found;  
Among the faithless faithful only he;  
Among innumerable false unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;  
Nor number nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,  
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,  
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained  
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;  
And with retorted scorn his back he turned  
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed."

## THE SIXTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described: Satan and his Powers retire under night. He calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan. Yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side,



with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of Heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the Deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

“ALL night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,  
Through Heaven’s wide champaign held his way, till  
Morn,

Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand  
Unbarred the gates of Light. There is a cave  
Within the Mount of God, fast by his Throne,  
Where Light and Darkness in perpetual round  
Lodge and dislodge by turns—which makes through  
Heaven

Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;  
Light issues forth, and at the other door  
Obsequious Darkness enters, till her hour  
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well  
Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn  
Such as in highest heaven, arrayed in gold  
Empyrean; from before her vanished Night,  
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain  
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,  
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,  
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.  
War he perceived, war in procinct, and found  
Already known what he for news had thought  
To have reported. Gladly then he mixed  
Among those friendly Powers, who him received  
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,  
That of so many myriads fallen yet one,  
Returned not lost. On to the sacred Hill  
They led him, high applauded, and present  
Before the Seat supreme; from whence a voice,  
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:—  
“‘ Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought  
The better fight, who single hast maintained  
Against revolted multitudes the cause  
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,  
And for the testimony of truth hast borne

Universal reproach, far worse to bear  
Than violence; for this was all thy care—  
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now  
Remains thee—aided by this host of friends,  
Back on thy foes more glorious to return  
Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue,  
By force who reason for their law refuse—  
Right reason for their law, and for their King  
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.  
Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,  
And thou, in military prowess next,  
Gabriel; lead forth to battle these my sons  
Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,  
By thousands and by millions ranged for fight,  
Equal in number to that godless crew  
Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms  
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heaven  
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss  
Into their place of punishment, the gulf  
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide  
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'

"So spake the Sovran Voice; and clouds began  
To darken all the Hill, and smoke to rowl  
In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign  
Of wrauth awaked; nor with less dread the loud  
Ethereal trumpet from on high gan blow.  
At which command the Powers Militant  
That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined  
Of union irresistible, moved on  
In silence their bright legions to the sound  
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed  
Heroic ardour to adventrous deeds  
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause  
Of God and his Messiah. On they move,  
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,  
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides  
Their perfet ranks; for high above the ground  
Their march was, and the passive air uphore  
Their nimble tread. As when the total kind

Of birds, in orderly array on wing,  
Came summoned over Eden to receive  
Their names of thee; so over many a tract  
Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,  
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last  
Far in the horizon, to the north, appeared  
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched  
In battailous aspect; and, nearer view,  
Bristled with upright beams innumerable  
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields  
Various, with boastful argument portrayed,  
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on  
With furious expedition: for they weened  
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,  
To win the Mount of God, and on his Throne  
To set the envier of his state, the proud  
Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain  
In the mid-way; though strange to us it seemed  
At first that Angel should with Angel war,  
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet  
So oft in festivals of joy and love  
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,  
Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout  
Of battle now began, and rushing sound  
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.  
High in the midst, exalted as a God,  
The Apostat in his sun-bright chariot sat,  
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed  
With flaming Cherubim and golden shields;  
Then lighted from his gorgeous Throne—for now  
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,  
A dreadful interval, and front to front  
Presented stood, in terrible array  
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,  
On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,  
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,  
Came towering, armed in adamant and gold.  
Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood  
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,  
And thus his own undaunted heart explores:—

“‘O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest  
Should yet remain, where faith and realty  
Remain not! Wherefore should not strength and might  
There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove  
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?  
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,  
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried  
Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just  
That he who in debate of truth hath won  
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike  
Victor. Though brutish that contest' and foul,  
When reason hath to deal with force, yet so  
Most reason is that reason overcome.’

“So pondering, and from his armed peers  
Forth-stepping opposite, half-way he met  
His daring foe, at this prevention more  
Incensed, and thus securely him defied:—

“Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have  
reached  
The highth of thy aspiring unopposed—  
The Throne of God unguarded, and his side  
Abandoned at the terror of thy power  
Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain  
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;  
Who, out of smallest things, could without end  
Have raised incessant armies to defeat  
Thy folly; or with solitary hand,  
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,  
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed  
Thy legions under darkness! But thou seest  
All are not of thy train; there be who faith  
Prefer, and piety to God, though then  
To thee not visible when I alone  
Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent  
From all: my Sect thou seest; now learn too late  
How few sometimes may know when thousands err.’

“Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,  
Thus answered:—‘Ill for thee, but in wished hour  
Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st  
From flight, seditious Angel, to receive

Thy merited reward, the first assay  
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,  
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose  
A third part of the Gods, in synod met  
Their deities to assert: who, while they feel  
Vigour divine within them, can allow  
Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st  
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win  
From me some plume, that thy success may show  
Destruction to the rest. This pause between  
(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know.—  
At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven  
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now  
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,  
Ministering Spirits, trained up in feast and song;  
Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven—  
Servility with freedom to contend,  
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.'

"To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied:—  
'Apostat! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find  
Of erring, from the path of truth remote.  
Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name  
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,  
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,  
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
Them whom he governs. This is servitude—  
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled  
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,  
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;  
Yet lewdly dar'st our ministering upbraid.  
Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve  
In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine  
Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.  
Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect: meanwhile,  
From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,  
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.'

"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,  
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell  
On the proud crest of Satan that no sight,  
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,

Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge  
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee  
His massy spear upstayed: as if, on earth,  
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,  
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,  
Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized  
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see  
Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,  
Presage of victory, and fierce desire  
Of battle: whereat Michaël bid sound  
The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of Heaven  
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung  
Hosannah to the Highest; nor stood at gaze  
The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined  
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,  
And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now.  
Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed  
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise  
Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss  
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.  
So under fiery cope together rushed  
Both battles main with ruinous assault  
And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven  
Resounded; and, had Earth been then, all Earth  
Had to her centre shook. What wonder, when  
Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought  
On either side, the least of whom could yield  
These elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions? How much more of power  
Army against army numberless to raise  
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,  
Though not destroy, their happy native seat;  
Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent  
From his strong hold of Heaven high overruled  
And limited their might, though numbered such  
As each divided legion might have seemed  
A numerous host, in strength, each armed hand  
A legion! Led in fight, yet leader seemed



Each warrior single as in chief; expert  
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway  
Of battle, open when, and when to close  
The ridges of grim war. No thought of flight,  
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed  
That argued fear; each on himself relied  
As only in his arm the moment lay  
Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame  
Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread  
That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground  
A standing fight; then, soaring on main wing,  
Tormented all the air; all air seemed then  
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale  
The battle hung; till Satan, who that day  
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms  
No equal, ranging through the dire attack  
Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length  
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled  
Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed sway  
Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down  
Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand  
He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb  
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,  
A vast circumference. At his approach  
The great Archangel from his warlike toil  
Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end  
Intestine war in Heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,  
Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown  
And visage all inflamed, first thus began:—  
“‘Author of Evil, unknown till thy revolt,  
Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest  
These acts of hateful strife—hateful to all,  
Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself  
And thy adherents—how hast thou disturbed  
Heaven’s blessed peace, and into Nature brought  
Misery, uncreated till the crime  
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled  
Thy malice into thousands, once upright  
And faithful, now proved false! But think not **here**  
To trouble holy rest; Heaven casts thee out



From all her confines; Heaven, the seat of bliss,  
Brooks not the works of violence and war.  
Hence, then, and Evil go with thee along,  
Thy offspring, to the place of Evil, Hell—  
Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils!  
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,  
Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,  
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.'

"So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus  
The Adversary:—'Nor think thou with wind  
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds  
Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these  
To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise  
Unvanquished—easier to transact with me  
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats  
To chase me hence? Err not that so shall end  
The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style  
The strife of glory; which we mean to win,  
Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell  
Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free,  
If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force—  
And join Him named Almighty to thy aid—  
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

"They ended parle, and both addressed for fight  
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue  
Of Angels, can relate, or to what things  
Likened on earth conspicuous, that may lift  
Human imagination to such highth  
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seemed,  
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,  
Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.  
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air  
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields  
Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood  
In horror; from each hand with speed retired,  
Where erst was thickest fight, the Angelic throng,  
And left large field, unsafe with the wind  
Of such commotion: such as (to set forth  
Great things by small) if, Nature's concord broke,  
Among the constellations war were sprung,

Two planets, rushing from aspect' malign  
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky  
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.  
Together both, with next to almighty arm  
Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed  
That might determine, and not need repeat  
As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared  
In might or swift prevention. But the sword  
Of Michaël from the armoury of God  
Was given him tempered so that neither keen  
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met  
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite  
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stayed,  
But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared  
All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,  
And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore  
The griding sword with discontinuous wound  
Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed,  
Not long divisible; and from the gash  
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed  
Sanguin, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,  
And all his armour stained, erewhile so bright,  
Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run  
By Angels many and strong, who interposed  
Defence, while others bore him on their shields  
Back to his chariot where it stood retired  
From off the files of war: there they him laid  
Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame  
To find himself not matchless, and his pride  
Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath  
His confidence to equal God in power.  
Yet soon he healed; for Spirits, that live throughout  
Vital in every part—not, as frail Man,  
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins—  
Cannot but by annihilating die;  
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound  
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:  
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,  
All intellect, all sense; and as they please  
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size

Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

“Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought, And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied, And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven Refrained his tongue blasphemous, but anon, Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing Uriel and Raphaël his vaunting foe, Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed, Vanquished—Adramelech and Asmadai, Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight, Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail. Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence Of Ramiel, scorched and blasted, overthrew. I might relate of thousands, and their names Eternize here on Earth; but those elect Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven, Seek not the praise of men: the other sort, In might though wondrous and in acts of war, Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory, Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell For strength from truth divided, and from just, Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise And ignominy, yet to glory aspires, Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame: Therefore eternal silence be their doom!

“And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved, With many an inroad gored; deformed rout Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground With shivered armour strown, and on a heap Chariot and charioteer lay overturned, And fiery foaming steeds; what stood recoiled, O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host,

Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—  
Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—  
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought  
By sin of disobedience, till that hour  
Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.  
Far otherwise the inviolable Saints  
In cubic phalanx firm advanced entire,  
Invulnerable, impenetrably armed;  
Such high advantages their innocence  
Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,  
Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood  
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained  
By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

“Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven  
Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,  
And silence on the odious din of war.  
Under her cloudy covert both retired,  
Victor and Vanquished. On the foughten field  
Michaël and his Angels, prevalent  
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,  
Cherubic waving fires: on the other part,  
Satan with his rebellious disappeared,  
Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest,  
His Potentates to council called by night,  
And in the midst thus undismayed began:—

“O now in danger tried, now known in arms  
Not to be overpowered, companions dear,  
Found worthy not of liberty alone—  
Too mean pretence—but, what we more affect,  
Honour, dominion, glory and renown;  
Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight  
(And, if one day, why not eternal days?)  
What Heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send  
Against us from about his Throne, and judged  
Sufficient to subdue us to his will,  
But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,  
Of future we may deem him, though till now  
Omniscient thought! True is, less firmly armed,  
Some disadvantage we endured, and pain—  
Till now not known, but, known, as soon condemned;

Since now we find this our empyreal form  
Incapable of mortal injury,  
Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,  
Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.  
Of evil, then, so small as easy think  
The remedy: perhaps more valid arms,  
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,  
May serve to better us and worse our foes,  
Or equal what between us made the odds,  
In nature none. If other hidden cause  
Left them superior, while we can preserve  
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,  
Due search and consultation will disclose.'

"He sat; and in the assembly next upstood  
Nisroch, of Principalities the prime.  
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight  
Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,  
And, cloudy in aspect', thus answering spake:—

"'Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free  
Enjoyment of our right as Gods! yet hard  
For Gods, and too unequal work, we find  
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,  
Against unpained, impassive; from which evil  
Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails  
Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain,  
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands  
Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well  
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,  
But live content—which is the calmest life;  
But pain is perfect misery, the worst  
Of evils, and, excessive, overturns  
All patience. He who, therefore, can invent  
With what more forcible we may offend  
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm  
Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves  
No less than for deliverance what we owe.'

"Where to, with look composed, Satan replied:—  
'Not uninvented that, which thou aright  
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.  
Which of us who beholds the bright surface'

Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand—  
This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned  
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold—  
Whose eye so superficially surveys  
These things as not to mind from whence they grow  
Deep under ground: materials dark and crude,  
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched  
With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth  
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?  
These in their dark nativity the Deep  
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;  
Which, into hollow engines long and round  
Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire  
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth  
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes  
Such implements of mischief as shall dash  
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands  
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed  
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.  
Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn  
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;  
Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined  
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'

"He ended; and his words their drooping cheer  
Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.  
The invention all admired, and each how he  
To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed,  
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought  
Impossible! Yet, haply, of thy race,  
In future days, if malice should abound,  
Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired  
With devilish machination, might devise  
Like instrument to plague the sons of men  
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.  
Forthwith from council to the work they flew;  
None arguing stood; innumerable hands  
Were ready; in a moment up they turned  
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath  
The originals of Nature in their crude  
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam



They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art  
Concocted and adusted, they reduced  
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.  
Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this Earth  
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,  
Whereof to found their engines and their balls  
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed  
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.  
So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,  
Secret they finished, and in order set,  
With silent circumspection, unespied.

“Now, when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared,  
Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms  
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood  
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,  
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills  
Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,  
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe,  
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,  
In motion or in halt. Him soon they met  
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow  
But firm battalion: back with speediest sail  
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,  
Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:—

“Arm, Warriors, arm for fight! The foe at hand,  
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit  
This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud  
He comes, and settled in his face I see  
Sad resolution and secure. Let each  
His adamantine coat gird well, and each  
Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbèd shield,  
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,  
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,  
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.’

“So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon  
In order, quit of all impediment.  
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,  
And onward move embattled: when, behold,  
Not distant far, with heavy pace the Foe  
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube



Training his devilish enginry, impaled  
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,  
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood  
A while; but suddenly at head appeared  
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:—

“Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,  
That all may see who hate us how we seek  
Peace and composure, and with open breast  
Stand ready to receive them, if they like  
Our overture, and turn not back perverse:  
But that I doubt. However, witness Heaven!  
Heaven, witness thou anon! while we discharge  
Freely our part. Ye, who appointed stand,  
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch  
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.’

“So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce  
Had ended, when to right and left the front  
Divided, and to either flank retired;  
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,  
A triple mounted row of pillars laid  
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,  
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,  
With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled),  
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths  
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,  
Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,  
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed  
Stood waving tipt with fire; while we, suspense,  
Collected stood within our thoughts amused.  
Not long! for sudden all at once their reeds  
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied  
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,  
But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,  
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar  
Embowelled with outrageous noise the air,  
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul  
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail  
Of iron globes; which, on the Victor Host  
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,  
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,

Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell  
By thousands, Angel on Archangel rowled,  
The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might  
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift  
By quick contraction or remove; but now  
Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;  
Nor served it to relax their serried files.  
What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse  
Repeated, and indecent overthrow  
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,  
And to their foes a laughter—for in view  
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,  
In posture to displode their second tire  
Of thunder; back defeated to return  
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,  
And to his mates thus in derision called:—

“O friends, why come not on these victors proud?  
Erewhile they fierce were coming; and, when we,  
To entertain them fair with open front  
And breast (what could we more?), propounded terms  
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,  
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,  
As they would dance. Yet for a dance they seemed  
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps  
For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,  
If our proposals once again were heard,  
We should compel them to a quick result.’

“To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:  
‘Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,  
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,  
Such as we might perceive amused them all,  
And stumbled many. Who receives them right  
Had need from head to foot well understand;  
Not understood, this gift they have besides—  
They shew us when our foes walk not upright.’

“So they among themselves in pleasant vein  
Stood scoffing, highthened in their thoughts beyond  
All doubt of victory; Eternal Might  
To match with their inventions they presumed  
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,

And all his host derided, while they stood  
A while in trouble. But they stood not long;  
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms  
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.  
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,  
Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed!)  
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills  
(For Earth hath this variety from Heaven  
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)  
Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew;  
From their foundations, loosening to and fro,  
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,  
Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops  
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,  
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel Host,  
When coming towards them so dread they saw  
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,  
Till on those cursed engines' triple row  
They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence  
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;  
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads  
Main promontories flung, which in the air  
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.  
Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and  
bruised,  
Into their substance pent—which wrought them pain  
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,  
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind  
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,  
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.  
The rest, in imitation, to like arms  
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore;  
So hills amid the air encountered hills,  
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,  
That underground they fought in dismal shade:  
Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game  
To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped  
Upon confusion rose. And now all Heaven  
Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread,  
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits

Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,  
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen  
This tumult, and permitted all, advised,  
That his great purpose he might so fulfil,  
To honour his Anointed Son, avenged  
Upon his enemies, and to declare  
All power on him transferred. Whence to his Son,  
The assessor of his Throne, he thus began:—

“ ‘ Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved,  
Son in whose face invisible is beheld  
Visibly, what by Deity I am,  
And in whose hand what by decree I do,  
Second Omnipotence! two days are passed,  
Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,  
Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame  
These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,  
As likeliest was when two such foes met armed:  
For to themselves I left them; and thou know’st  
Equal in their creation they were formed,  
Save what sin hath impaired—which yet hath wrought  
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom:  
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last  
Endless, and no solution will be found.

War wearied hath performed what war can do,  
And to disordered rage let loose the reins,  
With mountains, as with weapons, armed; which  
makes

Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.  
Two days are, therefore, passed; the third is thine:  
For thee I have ordained it, and thus far  
Have suffered, that the glory may be thine  
Of ending this great war, since none but thou  
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace  
Immense I have transfused, that all may know  
In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare,  
And this perverse commotion governed thus,  
To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir  
Of all things—to be Heir, and to be King  
By sacred unction, thy deservèd right.  
Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s might;

Ascend my chariot; guide the rapid wheels  
That shake Heaven's basis; bring forth all my war;  
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,  
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;  
Pursue these Sons of Darkness, drive them out  
From all Heaven's bounds into the utter Deep;  
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise  
God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

"He said, and on his Son with rays direct  
Shon full. He all his Father full expressed  
Ineffably into his face received;

And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:—

"O Father, O Supreme of Heavenly Thrones,  
First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st  
To glorify thy Son; I always thee,  
As is most just. This I my glory account,  
My exaltation, and my whole delight,  
That thou in me, well pleased, declar'st thy will  
Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.  
Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume,  
And gladlier shall resign when in the end  
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee  
For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.  
But whom thou hat'st I hate, and can put on  
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,  
Image of thee in all things: and shall soon,  
Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,  
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,  
To chains of darkness and the undying Worm,  
That from thy just obedience could revolt,  
Whom to obey is happiness entire.  
Then shall thy Saints, unmixed, and from the impure  
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount,  
Unfeignèd halleluiahs to thee sing,  
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.'

"So said, He, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose  
From the right hand of Glory where He sat;  
And the third sacred morn began to shine,  
Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with whirl-  
wind sound

**The chariot of Paternal Deity,**

Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel; undrawn,  
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed  
By four cherubic Shapes. Four faces each  
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all  
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels  
Of beryl, and careering fires between;  
Over their heads a crystal firmament,  
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure  
Amber and colours of the showery arch.  
He, in celestial panoply all armed  
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,  
Ascended; at his right hand Victory  
Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow,  
And quiver, with three-bolted thunder stored;  
And from about him fierce effusion rowled  
Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire.  
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,  
He onward came; far off his coming shon;  
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)  
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen.  
He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime  
On the crystallin sky, in saphir throned—  
Illustrious far and wide, but by his own  
First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised  
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed  
Aloft, by Angels borne, his Sign in Heaven;  
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced  
His army, circumfused on either wing,  
Under their Head embodied all in one.  
Before him Power Divine his way prepared;  
At his command the uprooted hills retired  
Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went  
Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,  
And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.  
“This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,  
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,  
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.  
In Heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?  
But to convince the proud what signs avail,



Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?  
They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,  
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight  
Took envy, and, aspiring to his highth,  
Stood re-imbattled fierce, by force or fraud  
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail  
Against God and Messiah, or to fall  
In universal ruin last; and now  
To final battle drew, disdaining flight,  
Or faint retreat: when the great Son of God  
To all his host on either hand thus spake:—

“ ‘Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,  
Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest.  
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God  
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;  
And, as ye have received, so have ye done,  
Invincibly. But of this cursed crew  
The punishment to other hand belongs;  
Vengeance is his, or whose He sole appoints.  
Number to this day’s work is not ordained,  
Nor multitude; stand only and behold  
God’s indignation on these godless poured  
By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,  
Yet envied; against me is all their rage,  
Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme  
Kingdom and power and glory appertains,  
Hath honoured me, according to his will.  
Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,  
That they may have their wish, to try with me  
In battle which the stronger proves—they all,  
Or I alone against them; since by strength  
They measure all, of other excellence  
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;  
Nor other strife with them do I voutsafe.’

“ So spake the Son, and into terror changed  
His countenance, too severe to be beheld,  
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.  
At once the Four spread out their starry wings  
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs  
Of his fierce chariot rowled, as with the sound



Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.  
He on his impious foes right onward drove,  
Gloomy as Night. Under his burning wheels  
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,  
All but the Throne itself of God. Full soon  
Among them he arrived, in his right hand  
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent  
Before him, such as in their souls infixed  
Plagues. They, astonished, all resistance lost,  
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;  
O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode  
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate',  
That wished the mountains now might be again  
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.  
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell  
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,  
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,  
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;  
One spirit in them ruled, and every eye  
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire  
Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,  
And of their wonted vigour left them drained,  
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen,  
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked  
His thunder in mid-volley; for he meant  
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.  
The overthrown he raised, and, as a herd  
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged,  
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued  
With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide,  
Rowled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed  
Into the wasteful Deep. The monstrous sight  
Strook them with horror backward; but far worse  
Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw  
Down from the verge of Heaven: eternal wrath  
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

"Hell heard the unsufferable noise; Hell saw  
Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled  
Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep

Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.  
Nine days they fell; confounded Chaos roared,  
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall  
Through his wild Anarchy; so huge a rout  
Incumbered him with ruin. Hell at last,  
Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed—  
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire  
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.  
Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired  
Her mural breach, returning whence it rowled.  
Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes  
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.  
To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood  
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,  
With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,  
Shaded with branching palm, each order bright  
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,  
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,  
Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode  
Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts  
And temple of his mighty Father throned  
On high; who into glory him received,  
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

“Thus measuring things in Heaven by things on  
Earth,

At thy request, and that thou may'st beware  
By what is past, to thee I have revealed  
What might have else to human race been hid—  
The discord which befell, and war in Heaven  
Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall  
Of those too high aspiring who rebelled  
With Satan: he who envies now thy state,  
Who now is plotting how he may seduce  
Thee also from obedience, that, with him  
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake  
His punishment, eternal misery;  
Which would be all his solace and revenge,  
As a despite done against the Most High,  
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.  
But listen not to his temptations; warn

Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,  
By terrible example, the reward  
Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,  
Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress."

## THE SEVENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this World was first created:—that God, after the expelling of Satan and his Angels out of Heaven, declared his pleasure to create another World, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of Angels, to perform the work of creation in six days: the Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into Heaven.

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania, by that name  
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine  
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,  
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!  
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou  
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top  
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born,  
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,  
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,  
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play  
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased  
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,  
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,  
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,  
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,  
Return me to my native element;  
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once  
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)  
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,  
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn.  
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound  
Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.  
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,  
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged

To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,  
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,  
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,  
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou  
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn  
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song,  
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.  
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance  
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race  
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian Bard  
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears  
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned  
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend  
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores;  
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.

Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael,  
The affable Archangel, had forewarned  
Adam, by dire example, to beware  
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven  
To those apostates, lest the like befall  
In Paradise to Adam or his race,  
Charged not to touch the interdicted Tree,  
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,  
So easily obeyed amid the choice  
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,  
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,  
The story heard attentive, and was filled  
With admiration and deep muse, to hear  
Of things so high and strange—things to their thought  
So unimaginable as hate in Heaven,  
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,  
With such confusion; but the evil, soon  
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those  
From whom it sprung, impossible to mix  
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed  
The doubts that in his heart arose; and, now  
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know  
What nearer might concern him—how this World  
Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began;  
When, and whereof, created; for what cause;

What within Eden, or without, was done  
Before his memory—as one whose drouth,  
Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,  
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,  
Proceeded thus to ask his Heavenly Guest:—  
“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,  
Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,  
Divine Interpreter! by favour sent  
Down from the Empyrean to forewarn  
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,  
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;  
For which to the infinitely Good we owe  
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment  
Receive with solemn purpose to observe  
Immutably his sovran will, the end  
Of what we are. But, since thou hast voutsafed  
Gently, for our instruction, to impart  
Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned  
Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,  
Deign to descend now lower, and relate  
What may no less perhaps avail us known—  
How first began this Heaven which we behold  
Distant so high, with moving fires adorned  
Innumerable; and this which yields or fills  
All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,  
Imbracing round this florid Earth; what cause  
Moved the Creator, in his holy rest  
Through all eternity, so late to build  
In Chaos; and, the work begun, how soon  
Absolved: if unforbid thou may'st unfold  
What we not to explore the secrets ask  
Of his eternal empire, but the more  
To magnify his works the more we know.  
And the great Light of Day yet wants to run  
Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in heaven  
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears  
And longer will delay, to hear thee tell  
His generation, and the rising birth  
Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:  
Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon

Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring  
Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch;  
Or we can bid his absence till thy song  
End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;  
And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:—

"This also thy request, with caution asked,  
Obtain; though to recount almighty works  
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,  
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?  
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve  
To glorify the Maker, and infer  
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld  
Thy hearing. Such commission from above  
I have received, to answer thy desire  
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain  
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope  
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,  
Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night,  
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven,  
Enough is left besides to search and know;  
But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less  
Her temperance over appetite, to know  
In measure what the mind may well contain;  
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns  
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

"Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven  
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host  
Of Angels than that star the stars among)  
Fell with his flaming Legions through the Deep  
Into his place, and the great Son returned  
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent  
Eternal Father from his Throne beheld  
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:—

"At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought  
All like himself rebellious; by whose aid  
This inaccessible high strength, the seat  
Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,  
He trusted to have seized, and into fraud  
Drew many whom their place knows here no more.



Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,  
Their station; Heaven, yet populous, retains  
Number sufficient to possess her realms,  
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent  
With ministeries due and solemn rites.  
But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm  
Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—  
My damage fondly deemed—I can repair  
That detriment, if such it be to lose  
Self-lost, and in a moment will create  
Another world; out of one man a race  
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,  
Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,  
They open to themselves at length the way  
Up hither, under long obedience tried,  
And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth,  
One kingdom, joy and union without end.  
Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven;  
And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee  
This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!  
My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee  
I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep  
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.  
Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill  
Infinitude; nor vacuous the space,  
Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,  
And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
To act or not. Necessity and Chance  
Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.'

"So spake the Almighty; and to what he spake  
His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.  
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift  
Than time or motion, but to human ears  
Cannot without process' of speech be told,  
So told as earthly notion can receive.  
Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven  
When such was heard declared the Almighty's will.  
Glory they sung to the Most High, goodwill  
To future men, and in their dwellings peace—  
Glory to Him whose just avenging ire

Had driven out the ungodly from his sight  
And the habitations of the just; to Him  
Glory and praise whose wisdom had ordained  
Good out of evil to create—instead  
Of Spirits malign, a better Race to bring  
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse  
His good to worlds and ages infinite.

“So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son  
On his great expedition now appeared,  
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned  
Of majesty divine, sapience and love  
Immense; and all his Father in him shon.  
About his chariot numberless were poured  
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,  
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged  
From the armoury of God, where stand of old  
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged  
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,  
Celestial equipage; and now came forth  
Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,  
Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound  
On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word  
And Spirit coming to create new worlds.  
On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore  
They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss,  
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,  
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds  
And surging waves, as mountains to assault  
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

“‘Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep, peace!’  
Said then the omnific Word: ‘your discord end!’  
Nor stayed; but, on the wings of Cherubim  
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode  
Far into Chaos and the World unborn;  
For Chaos heard his voice. Him all his train  
Followed in bright procession, to behold  
Creation, and the wonders of his might.  
Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand

He took the golden compasses, prepared  
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe  
This Universe, and all created things.  
One foot he centred, and the other turned  
Round through the vast profundity obscure,  
And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;  
This be thy just circumference, O World!'  
Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,  
Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound  
Covered the Abyss; but on the watery calm  
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,  
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,  
Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged  
The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,  
Adverse to life; then founded, then conglobed,  
Like things to like, the rest to several place  
Disparted, and between spun out the Air,  
And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.

"'Let there be Light!' said God; and forthwith Light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East  
To journey through the aery gloom began,  
Sphered in a radiant cloud—for yet the Sun  
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourned the while. God saw the Light was good;  
And light from darkness by the hemisphere  
Divided: Light, the Day, and Darkness Night,  
He named. Thus was the first Day even and morn;  
Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung  
By the celestial quires, when orient light  
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld,  
Birth-day of Heaven and Earth. With joy and shout  
The hollow universal orb they filled,  
And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised  
God and his works; Creator him they sung,  
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.

"Again God said, 'Let there be firmament  
Amid the waters, and let it divide  
The waters from the waters!' And God made  
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,

Transparent, elemental air, diffused  
In circuit to the uttermost convex  
Of this great round—partition firm and sure,  
The waters underneath from those above  
Dividing; for as Earth, so he the World  
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide  
Crystallin ocean, and the loud misrule  
Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes  
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:  
And Heaven he named the Firmament. So even  
And morning chorus sung the second Day.

“The Earth was formed, but, in the womb as yet  
Of waters, embryon immature, involved,  
Appeared not; over all the face of Earth  
Main ocean flowed, not idle, but, with warm  
Prolific humour softening all her globe,  
Fermented the great mother to conceive,  
Sate with genial moisture; when God said,  
‘Be gathered now, ye waters under heaven,  
Into one place, and let dry land appear!’  
Immediately the mountains huge appear  
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave  
Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.  
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low  
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,  
Capacious bed of waters. Thither they  
Hasted with glad precipitance, uprowled,  
As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry:  
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,  
For haste; such flight the great command impressed  
On the swift floods. As armies at the call  
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)  
Troop to their standard, so the watery throng,  
Wave rowling after wave, where way they found—  
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,  
Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill;  
But they, or underground, or circuit wide  
With serpent error wandering, found their way,  
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore:  
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,

All but within those banks where rivers now  
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.  
The dry land Earth, and the great receptacle  
Of congregated waters he called Seas;  
And saw that it was good, and said, 'Let the Earth  
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,  
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,  
Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth!'  
He scarce had said when the bare Earth, till then  
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,  
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad  
Her universal face with pleasant green;  
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,  
Opening their various colours, and made gay  
Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown,  
Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept  
The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed  
Imbattled in her field: add the humble shrub,  
And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last  
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread  
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed  
Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,  
With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,  
With borders long the rivers, that Earth now  
Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,  
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt  
Her sacred shades; though God had yet not rained  
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground  
None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist  
Went up and watered all the ground, and each  
Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth  
God made, and every herb before it grew  
On the green stem. God saw that it was good;  
So even and morn recorded the third Day.

"Again the Almighty spake, 'Let there be Lights  
High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide  
The Day from Night; and let them be for signs,  
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;  
And let them be for lights, as I ordain  
Their office in the firmament of heaven,

To give light on the Earth!' and it was so.  
And God made two great Lights, great for their use  
To Man, the greater to have rule by day,  
The less by night, alterne; and made the Stars,  
And set them in the firmament of heaven  
To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day  
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,  
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,  
Surveying his great work, that it was good:  
For, of celestial bodies, first the Sun  
A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,  
Though of ethereal mould; then formed the Moon  
Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,  
And sowed with stars the heaven thick as a field.  
Of light by far the greater part he took,  
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed  
In the Sun's orb, made porous to receive  
And drink the liquid light, firm to retain  
Her gathered beams, great palace now of Light.  
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars  
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,  
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;  
By tincture or reflection they augment  
Their small peculiar, though, from human sight  
So far remote, with diminution seen.  
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,  
Regent of day, and all the horizon round  
Invested with bright rays, jocond to run  
His longitude through heaven's high-road; the grey  
Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,  
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon,  
But opposite in levelled west, was set,  
His mirror, with full face borrowing her light  
From him; for other light she needed none  
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps  
Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,  
Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign  
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,  
With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared  
Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned



With her bright luminaries, that set and rose,  
Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth Day.

“And God said, ‘Let the waters generate  
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul;  
And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings  
Displayed on the open firmament of heaven!’  
And God created the great Whales, and each  
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously  
The waters generated by their kinds,  
And every bird of wing after his kind,  
And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying,  
‘Be fruitful, multiply, and, in the seas,  
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;  
And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth!’  
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,  
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals  
Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,  
Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft  
Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,  
Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves  
Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,  
Shew to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold,  
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend  
Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food  
In jointed armour watch; on smooth the seal  
And bended dolphins play; part, huge of bulk,  
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,  
Tempest the ocean. There Leviathan,  
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep  
Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,  
And seems a moving land, and at his gills  
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.  
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,  
Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg, that soon,  
Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed  
Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge  
They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime,  
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud  
In prospect. There the eagle and the stork  
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.

Part loosely wing the Region; part, more wise,  
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,  
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth  
Their aerie caravan, high over seas  
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing  
Easing their flight: so steers the prudent crane  
Her annual voyage, borne on winds: the air  
Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.  
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song  
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings,  
Till even; nor then the solemn nightingal  
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.  
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed  
Their downy breast; the swan, with archèd neck  
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows  
Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit  
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower  
The mid aerial sky. Others on ground  
Walked firm—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train  
Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue  
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus  
With Fish replenished, and the air with Fowl,  
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth Day.

“The sixth, and of Creation last, arose  
With evening harps and matin; when God said,  
‘Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,  
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,  
Each in their kind!’ The Earth obeyed, and, straight  
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth  
Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,  
Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground up rose,  
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons  
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den—  
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked;  
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:  
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks  
Pasturing at once and in broad herds, upsprung.  
The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared  
The tawny Lion, pawing to get free

His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from bonds,  
And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the Ounce,  
The Libbard, and the Tiger, as the Mole  
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw  
In hillocks; the swift Stag from underground  
Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould  
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved  
His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,  
As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,  
The River-horse and scaly Crocodile.  
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,  
Insect or worm. Those waved their limber fans  
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact  
In all the liveries decked of summer's pride,  
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green;  
These as a line their long dimension drew,  
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace: not all  
Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,  
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved  
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept  
The parsimonious Emnet, provident  
Of future, in small room large heart enclosed—  
Pattern of just equality perhaps  
Hereafter—joined in her popular tribes  
Of commonalty. Swarming next appeared  
The female Bee, that feeds her husband drone  
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells  
With honey stored. The rest are numberless,  
And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names  
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown  
The Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,  
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes  
And hairy mane terrific, though to thee  
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.  
“Now Heaven in all her glory shon, and rowled  
Her motions, as the great First Mover's hand  
First wheeled their course; Earth, in her rich attire  
Consummate, lovely smiled; Air, Water, Earth,  
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked  
Frequent; and of the sixth Day yet remained.

There wanted yet the master-work, the end  
Of all yet done—a creature who, not prone  
And brute as other creatures, but endued  
With sanctity of reason, might erect  
His stature, and, upright with front serene  
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence  
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,  
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good  
Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes  
Directed in devotion, to adore  
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief  
Of all his works. Therefore the Omnipotent  
Eternal Father (for where is not He  
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:—  
'Let us make now Man in our image, Man  
In our similitude, and let them rule  
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,  
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,  
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground!'  
This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,  
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed  
The breath of life; in his own image he  
Created thee, in the image of God  
Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul.  
Male he created thee, but thy consort'  
Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said,  
'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;  
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold  
Over fish of the sea and fowl of the air,  
And every living thing that moves on the Earth!'  
Wherever thus created—for no place  
Is yet distinct by name—thence, as thou know'st,  
He brought thee into this delicious grove,  
This Garden, planted with the trees of God,  
Delectable both to behold and taste,  
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food  
Gave thee. All sorts are here that all the earth yields,  
Variety without end; but of the tree  
Which tasted works knowledge of good and evil  
Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest.

Death is the penalty imposed; beware,  
And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin  
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.  
“Here finished He, and all that he had made  
Viewed, and behold! all was entirely good.  
So even and morn accomplished the sixth Day;  
Yet not till the Creator, from his work  
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,  
Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,  
Thence to behold this new-created World,  
The addition of his empire, how it shewed  
In prospect from his Throne, how good, how fair,  
Answering his great Idea. Up he rode,  
Followed with acclamation, and the sound  
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned  
Angelic harmonies. The Earth, the Air  
Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),  
The heavens and all the constellations rung,  
The planets in their stations listening stood,  
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.  
'Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung;  
'Open, ye Heavens, your living doors! let in  
The great Creator, from his work returned  
Magnificent, his six days' work, a World!  
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign  
To visit oft the dwellings of just men  
Delighted, and with frequent intercourse  
Thither will send his wingèd messengers  
On errands of supernal grace.' So sung  
The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven,  
That opened wide her blazing portals, led  
To God's eternal house direct the way—  
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,  
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear  
Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way  
Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest  
Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh  
Evening arose in Eden—for the sun  
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,  
Forerunning night—when at the holy mount

Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne  
Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,  
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down  
With his great Father; for He also went  
Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege  
Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained,  
Author and end of all things, and from work  
Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh Day,  
As resting on that day from all his work;  
But not in silence holy kept: the harp  
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe  
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,  
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,  
Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice  
Choral or unison; of incense clouds,  
Fuming from golden censers, hid the Mount.  
Creation and the Six Days' acts they sung:—  
'Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite  
Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue  
Relate thee—greater now in thy return  
Than from the Giant-angels? Thee that day  
Thy thunders magnified; but to create  
Is greater than created to destroy.  
Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound  
Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt  
Of Spirits apostat, and their counsels vain,  
Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought  
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw  
The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks  
To lessen thee, against his purpose, serves  
To manifest the more thy might; his evil  
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.  
Witness this new-made World, another Heaven  
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view  
On the clear hyalin, the glassy sea;  
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars  
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world  
Of destined habitation—but thou know'st  
Their seasons; among these the seat of men,  
Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,



Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,  
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,  
 Created in his image, there to dwell  
 And worship him, and in reward to rule  
 Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,  
 And multiply a race of worshipers  
 Holy and just! thrice happy, if they know  
 Their happiness, and persevere upright!’

“So sung they, and the Empyrean rung  
 With halleluiahs. Thus was Sabbath kept.  
 And thy request think now fulfilled that asked  
 How first this World and face of things began,  
 And what before thy memory was done  
 From the beginning, that posterity,  
 Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek’st  
 Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.”

## THE EIGHTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation—his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve. His discourse with the Angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adam’s ear  
 So charming left his voice that he a while  
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;  
 Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:—  
 “What thanks sufficient, or what recompense  
 Equal, have I to render thee, divine  
 Historian, who thus largely hast allayed  
 The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsafed  
 This friendly condescension to relate  
 Things else by me unsearchable—now heard  
 With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,  
 With glory attributed to the high

Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,  
Which only thy solution can resolve.  
When I behold this goodly frame, this World,  
Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute  
Their magnitudes—this Earth, a spot, a grain,  
An atom, with the Firmament compared  
And all her numbered stars, that seem to rowl  
Spaces incomprehensible (for such  
Their distance argues, and their swift return  
Diurnal) merely to officiate light  
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,  
One day and night, in all their vast survey  
Useless besides—reasoning, I oft admire  
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit  
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand  
So many nobler bodies to create,  
Greater so manifold, to this one use,  
For aught appears, and on their Orbs impose  
Such restless revolution day by day  
Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,  
That better might with far less compass move,  
Served by more noble than herself, attains  
Her end without least motion, and receives,  
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought  
Of incorporeal speed her warmth and light:  
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”

So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed  
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve  
Perceiving, where, she sat retired in sight,  
With lowliness majestic from her seat,  
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,  
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,  
To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,  
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,  
And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.  
Yet went she not as not with such discourse  
Delighted, or not capable her ear  
Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved,  
Adam relating, she sole auditress;  
Her husband the relater she preferred

Before the Angel, and of him to ask  
Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix  
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
With conjugal caresses: from his lip  
Not words alone pleased her. Oh, when meet now  
Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?  
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,  
Not unattended; for on her as Queen  
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,  
And from about her shot darts of desire  
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.  
And Raphael now to Adam's doubt proposed  
Benevolent and facile thus replied:—

“To ask or search I blame thee not; for Heaven  
Is as the Book of God before thee set,  
Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn  
His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.  
This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth  
Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest  
From Man or Angel the great Architect  
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge  
His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought  
Rather admire. Or, if they list to try  
Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens  
Hath left to their disputes—perhaps to move  
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide  
Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven,  
And calculate the stars; how they will wield  
The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive,  
To save appearances; how gird the Sphere  
With Centric and Eccentric scribbled o'er,  
Cycle and Epicycle, orb in orb.  
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,  
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest  
That bodies bright and greater should not serve  
The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,  
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives  
The benefit. Consider, first, that great  
Or bright infers not excellence. The Earth,  
Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,

Nor glistening, may of solid good contain  
More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,  
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,  
But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,  
His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.  
Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries  
Officious, but to thee, Earth's habitant.  
And, for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak  
The Maker's high magnificence, who built  
So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,  
That Man may know he dwells not in his own—  
An edifice too large for him to fill,  
Lodged in a small partition, and the rest  
Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.  
The swiftness of those Circles at'tribute,  
Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,  
That to corporeal substances could add  
Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow,  
Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven  
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived  
In Eden—distance inexpressible  
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,  
Admitting motion in the Heavens, to shew  
Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;  
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem  
To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.  
God, to remove his ways from human sense,  
Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight,  
If it presume, might err in things too high,  
And no advantage gain. What if the Sun  
Be centre to the World, and other Stars,  
By his attractive virtue and their own  
Incited, dance about him various rounds?  
Their wandering course, now high, now low, then  
hid,  
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,  
In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these  
The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,  
Insensibly three different motions move?  
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,

Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,  
Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift  
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,  
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel  
Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,  
If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,  
Travelling east, and with her part averse  
From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part  
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,  
Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,  
To the terrestrial Moon to be as a star,  
Enlightening her by day, as she by night  
This Earth—reciprocal, if land be there,  
Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest  
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce  
Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat  
Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,  
With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,  
Communicating male and female light—  
Which two great sexes animate the World,  
Stored in each Orb perhaps with some that live.  
For such vast room in Nature unpossessed  
By living soul, desert and desolate,  
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute  
Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far  
Down to this habitable, which returns  
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.  
But whether thus these things, or whether not—  
Whether the Sun, predominant in heaven,  
Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun;  
He from the east his flaming road begin,  
Or she from west her silent course advance  
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps  
On her soft axle, while she paces even,  
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—  
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:  
Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.  
Of other creatures as him pleases best,  
Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou  
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise

And thy fair Eve; Heaven is for thee too high  
To know what passes there. Be lowly wise;  
Think only what concerns thee and thy being;  
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there  
Live, in what state, condition, or degree—  
Contented that thus far hath been revealed  
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.”

To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:—  
“How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure  
Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene,  
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live  
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts  
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which  
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,  
And not molest us, unless we ourselves  
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions  
vain!

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove  
Unchecked; and of her roving is no end,  
Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn  
That not to know at large of things remote  
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know  
That which before us lies in daily life,  
Is the prime wisdom: what is more is fume,  
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,  
And renders us in things that most concern  
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.  
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend  
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand  
Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise  
Of something not unseasonable to ask,  
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.  
Thee I have heard relating what was done  
Ere my remembrance; now hear me relate  
My story, which, perhaps, thou hast not heard.  
And day is yet not spent; till then thou seest  
How subtly to detain thee I devise,  
Inviting thee to hear while I relate—  
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply.  
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven;



And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear  
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst  
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour  
Of sweet repast. They satiate, and soon fill,  
Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine  
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphael answered, heavenly  
meek:—

"Nor are thy lips ungrateful, Sire of Men,  
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee  
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured,  
Inward and outward both, his image fair:  
Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace  
Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms.  
Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth  
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire  
Gladly into the ways of God with Man;  
For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set  
On Man his equal love. Say therefore on;  
For I that day was absent, as befell,  
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,  
Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,  
Squared in full legion (such command we had),  
To see that none thence issued forth a spy  
Or enemy, while God was in his work,  
Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,  
Destruction with Creation might have mixed.  
Not that they durst without his leave attempt;  
But us he sends upon his high behests  
For state, as sovran King, and to inure  
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut,  
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong,  
But, long ere our approaching, heard within  
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song—  
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.  
Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light  
Ere Sabbath-evening; so we had in charge.  
But thy relation now; for I attend,  
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with  
mine."

So spake the godlike Power, and thus our Sire:—  
“For Man to tell how human life began  
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?  
Desire with thee still longer to converse  
Induced me. As new-waked from soundest sleep,  
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,  
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun  
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.  
Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,  
And gazed a while the ample sky, till, raised  
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,  
As thitherward endeavoring, and upright  
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw  
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,  
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflowed.  
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
With supple joints, as lively vigour led;  
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,  
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake;  
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name  
Whate’er I saw. ‘Thou Sun,’ said I, ‘fair light,  
And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,  
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,  
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,  
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here!  
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,  
In goodness and in power præ-eminent.  
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,  
From whom I have that thus I move and live,  
And feel that I am happier than I know!’  
While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,  
From where I first drew air, and first beheld  
This happy light, when answer none returned,  
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,  
Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep  
First found me, and with soft oppression seized

My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought  
I then was passing to my former state  
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:  
When suddenly stood at my head a Dream,  
Whose inward apparition gently moved  
My fancy to believe I yet had being,  
And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,  
And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,  
First Man, of men innumerable ordained  
First father! called by thee, I come thy guide  
To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'  
So saying, by the hand he took me, raised,  
And over fields and waters, as in air  
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up  
A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,  
A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees  
Planted, with walks and bowers, that what I saw  
Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree  
Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye  
Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite  
To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found  
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream  
Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun  
My wandering, had not He who was my guide  
Up hither from among the trees appeared,  
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,  
In adoration at his feet I fell  
Submiss. He reared me, and, 'Whom thou sought'st  
I am,'  
Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest  
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.  
This Paradise I give thee; count it thine  
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat.  
Of every tree that in the Garden grows  
Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth.  
But of the tree whose operation brings  
Knowledge of Good and Ill, which I have set,  
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,  
Amid the garden by the Tree of Life—  
Remember what I warn thee—shun to taste,

And shun the bitter consequence: for know,  
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command  
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,  
From that day mortal, and this happy state  
Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world  
Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced  
The rigid interdiction, which resounds  
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice  
Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect'  
Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:—  
'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth  
To thee and to thy race I give; as lords  
Possess it, and all things that therein live,  
Or live in sea or air, beast, fish, and fowl.  
In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold  
After their kinds; I bring them to receive  
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty  
With low subjection. Understand the same  
Of fish within their watery residence,  
Not hither summoned, since they cannot change  
Their element to draw the thinner air.'  
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold  
Approaching two and two—these cowering low  
With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.  
I named them as they passed, and understood  
Their nature; with such knowledge God endued  
My sudden apprehension. But in these  
I found not what methought I wanted still,  
And to the Heavenly Vision thus presumed:—  
“‘O, by what name—for Thou above all these,  
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,  
Surpassest far my naming—how may I  
Adore thee, Author of this Universe,  
And all this good to Man, for whose well-being  
So amply, and with hands so liberal,  
Thou hast provided all things? But with me  
I see not who partakes. In solitude  
What happiness? who can enjoy alone,  
Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?’  
Thus I, presumptuous; and the Vision bright,

As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:—

“‘What call'st thou solitude? Is not the Earth  
With various living creatures, and the Air,  
Replenished, and all these at thy command  
To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not  
Their language and their ways? They also know,  
And reason not contemptibly; with these  
Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.’  
So spake the Universal Lord and seemed  
So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,  
And humble deprecation, thus replied:—

“‘Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power;  
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.  
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,  
And these inferior far beneath me set?  
Among unequals what society  
Can sort, what harmony or true delight?  
Which must be mutual, in proportion due  
Given and received; but, in disparity,  
The one intense, the other still remiss,  
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove  
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak  
Such as I seek, fit to participate  
All rational delight, wherein the brute  
Cannot be human consort. They rejoice  
Each with their kind, lion with lioness;  
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:  
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl,  
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;  
Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all.’

“Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased:—  
‘A nice and subtle happiness, I see,  
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice  
Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste  
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.  
What think'st thou, then, of Me, and this my state?  
Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed  
Of happiness, or not, who am alone  
From all eternity? for none I know  
Second to me or like, equal much less.

How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,  
Save with the creatures which I made, and those  
To me inferior infinite descents  
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?’

“He ceased. I lowly answered:—‘To attain  
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways  
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things!  
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in Thee  
Is no deficiency found. Not so is Man,  
But in degree—the cause of his desire  
By conversation with his like to help  
Or solace his defects. No need that thou  
Should’st propagate, already infinite,  
And through all numbers absolute, though One;  
But Man by number is to manifest  
His single imperfection, and beget  
Like of his like, his image multiplied,  
In unity defective; which requires  
Collateral love, and dearest amity.  
Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,  
Best with thyself accompanied, seek’st not  
Social communication—yet, so pleased,  
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt  
Of union or communion, deified;  
I, by conversing, cannot these erect  
From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.’  
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used  
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained  
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:—

“‘Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,  
And find thee knowing not of beasts alone,  
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself—  
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,  
My image, not imparted to the brute;  
Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee,  
Good Reason was thou freely shouldst dislike.  
And be so minded still. I, ere thou spak’st,  
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,  
And no such company as then thou saw’st  
Intended thee—for trial only brought,



To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet.  
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,  
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,  
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'  
"He ended, or I heard no more; for now  
My earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,  
Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth  
In that celestial colloquy sublime,  
As with an object that excels the sense,  
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair  
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called  
By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.  
Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell  
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,  
Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,  
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the Shape  
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;  
Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took  
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,  
And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,  
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.  
The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;  
Under his forming hands a creature grew,  
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair  
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now  
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained  
And in her looks, which from that time infused  
Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,  
And into all things from her air inspired  
The spirit of love and amorous delight.  
She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked  
To find her, or for ever to deplore  
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:  
When, out of hope, behold her not far off,  
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned  
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow  
To make her amiable. On she came,  
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen  
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed  
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.

Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture dignity and love.

I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud:—

“ ‘This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled  
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,  
Giver of all things fair—but fairest this  
Of all thy gifts!—nor enviest. I now see  
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my Self  
Before me. Woman is her name, of Man  
Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo  
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,  
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’

“ She heard me thus; and, though divinely brought,  
Yet innocence and virgin modesty,  
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,  
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,  
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,  
The most desirable—or, to say all,  
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought—  
Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned.  
I followed her; she what was honour knew,  
And with obsequious majesty approved  
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower  
I led her blushing like the Morn; all Heaven,  
And happy constellations, on that hour  
Shed their selectest influence; the Earth  
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;  
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs  
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings  
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,  
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night  
Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening-star  
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp.

“ Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought  
My story to the sum of earthly bliss  
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find  
In all things else delight indeed, but such  
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,  
Nor vehement desire—these delicacies  
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,

Walks, and the melody of birds: but here,  
Far otherwise, transported I behold,  
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,  
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else  
Superior and unmoved, here only weak  
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.  
Or Nature failed in me, and left some part  
Not proof enough such object to sustain,  
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps  
More than enough—at least on her bestowed  
Too much of ornament, in outward show  
Elaborate, of inward less exact.  
For well I understand in the prime end  
Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind  
And inward faculties, which most excel;  
In outward also her resembling less  
His image who made both, and less expressing  
The character of that dominion given  
O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach  
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
And in herself complete, so well to know  
Her own, that what she wills to do or say  
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.  
All higher Knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shews;  
Authority and Reason on her wait,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally; and, to consum'mate all,  
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat  
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
About her, as a guard angelic placed.”  
To whom the Angel, with contracted brow:—  
“Accuse not Nature! she hath done her part;  
Do thou but thine! and be not diffident  
Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou  
Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,  
By attribu'ting overmuch to things  
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.  
For, what admir'st thou, what transports thee so?

An outside—fair, no doubt, and worthy well  
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;  
Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself;  
Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more  
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right  
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,  
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,  
And to realities yield all her shows—  
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,  
So awful, that with honour thou may'st love  
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.  
But, if the sense of touch, whereby mankind  
Is propagated, seem such dear delight  
Beyond all other, think the same voutsafed  
To cattle and each beast; which would not be  
To them made common and divulged, if aught  
Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue  
The soul of Man, or passion in him move.  
What higher in her society thou find'st  
Attractive, human, rational, love still;  
In loving thou dost well; in passion not,  
Wherein true Love consists not. Love refines  
The thoughts, and heart enlarges—hath his seat  
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale  
By which to Heavenly Love thou may'st ascend,  
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause  
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."

To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:—  
"Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught  
In procreation, common to all kinds  
(Though higher of the genial bed by far,  
And with mysterious reverence, I deem),  
So much delights me as those graceful acts,  
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow  
From all her words and actions, mixed with love  
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned  
Union of mind, or in us both one soul—  
Harmony to behold in wedded pair  
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.  
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose

What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,  
Who meet with various objects, from the sense  
Variously representing, yet, still free,  
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.  
To love thou blam'st me not—for Love, thou say'st,  
Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;  
Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask.  
Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love  
Express they—by looks only, or do they mix  
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed  
Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,  
Answered:—"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st  
Us happy, and without Love no happiness.  
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st  
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy  
In eminence, and obstacle find none  
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.  
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,  
Total they mix, union of pure with pure  
Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need  
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.  
But I can now no more: the parting Sun  
Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles  
Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.  
Be strong, live happy, and love! but first of all  
Him whom to love is to obey, and keep  
His great command; take heed lest passion sway  
Thy judgment to do aught which else free-will  
Would not admit; thine and of all thy sons  
The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!  
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,  
And all the Blest. Stand fast; to stand or fall  
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.  
Perfet within, no outward aid require;  
And all temptation to transgress repel."

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus  
Followed with benediction:—"Since to part,  
Go, Heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,  
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!

Gentle to me and affable hath been  
Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever  
With grateful memory. Thou to Mankind  
Be good and friendly still, and oft return!"

So parted they, the Angel up to Heaven  
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

## THE NINTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise; enters into the Serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that Enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt her found alone. Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields. The Serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking, with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the Serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech and such understanding not till now; the Serpent answers that by tasting of a certain Tree in the Garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the Tree of Knowledge forbidden: the Serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat. She, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her, and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit. The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No MORE of talk where God or Angel Guest  
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used  
To sit indulgent, and with him partake  
Rural repast, permitting him the while  
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change  
Those notes to tragic—foul distrust, and breach  
Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt  
And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,



Now alienated, distance and distaste,  
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,  
That brought into this World a world of woe,  
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,  
Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument  
Not less but more heroic than the wrauth  
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued  
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage  
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;  
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's that so long  
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:  
If answerable style I can obtain  
Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns  
Her nightly visitation unimplored,  
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires  
Easy my unpremeditated verse,  
Since first this subject for heroic song  
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late,  
Not sedulous by nature to indite  
Wars, hitherto the only argument  
Heroic deemed, chief maistrie to dissect  
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights  
In battles feigned (the better fortitude  
Of patience and heroic martyrdom  
Unsung), or to describe races and games,  
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,  
Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds,  
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights  
At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast  
Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:  
The skill of artifice or office mean;  
Not that which justly gives heroic name  
To person or to poem! Me, of these  
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument  
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise  
That name, unless an age too late, or cold  
Climat, or years, damp my intended wing  
Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,  
Not Hers who brings it nightly to my ear.  
The Sun was sunk, and after him the Star

Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring  
Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter  
'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end  
Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,  
When Satan, who late fled before the threats  
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved  
In meditated fraud and malice, bent  
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap  
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.  
By night he fled, and at midnight returned  
From compassing the Earth—cautious of day  
Since Uriel, Regent of the Sun, descried  
His entrance, and forwarned the Cherubim  
That kept their watch. Thence, full of anguish,  
driven,

The space of seven continued nights he rode  
With darkness—thrice the equinoctial line  
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night  
From pole to pole, traversing each colure—  
On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse  
From entrance or cherubic watch by stealth  
Found unsuspected way. There was a place  
(Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wraught the  
change)

Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,  
Into a gulf shot under ground, till part  
Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.  
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,  
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought  
Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched and land  
From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool  
Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob;  
Downward as far antartic; and, in length,  
West from Orontes to the ocean barred  
At Darien, thence to the land where flows  
Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roamed  
With narrow search, and with inspection deep  
Considered every creature, which of all  
Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found  
The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.

Him, after long debate, irresolute  
Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose  
Fit vessel, fittest Imp of fraud, in whom  
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide  
From sharpest sight; for in the wily snake  
Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark  
As from his wit and native subtlety  
Proceeding, which, in other beasts observed,  
Doubt might beget of diabolic power  
Active within beyond the sense of brute.  
Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief  
His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:—  
“O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred  
More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built  
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!  
For what God, after better, worse would build?  
Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens,  
That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,  
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,  
In thee concentring all their precious beams  
Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven  
Is centre, yet extends to all, so thou  
Centring receiv’st from all those orbs; in thee,  
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears,  
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth  
Of creatures animate with gradual life  
Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.  
With what delight could I have walked thee round,  
If I could joy in aught—sweet interchange  
Of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,  
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,  
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these  
Find place or refuge; and the more I see  
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel  
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege  
Of contraries; all good to me becomes  
Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my state.  
But neither here seek I, nor in Heaven,  
To dwell, unless by maistring Heaven’s Supreme;  
Nor hope to be myself less miserable

By what I seek, but others to make such  
As I, though thereby worse to me redound.  
For only in destroying I find ease  
To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyed,  
Or won to what may work his utter loss,  
For whom all this was made, all this will soon  
Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe:  
In woe then, that destruction wide may range!  
To me shall be the glory sole among  
The Infernal Powers, in one day to have marred  
What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days  
Continued making, and who knows how long  
Before had been contriving? though perhaps  
Not longer than since I in one night freed  
From servitude inglorious well nigh half  
The Angelic Name, and thinner left the throng  
Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,  
And to repair his numbers thus impaired—  
Whether such virtue, spent of old, now failed  
More Angels to create (if they at least  
Are his created), or to spite us more—  
Determined to advance into our room  
A creature formed of earth, and him endow,  
Exalted from so base original,  
With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed  
He effected; Man he made, and for him built  
Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,  
Him Lord pronounced, and, O indignity!  
Subjected to his service Angel-wings  
And flaming ministers, to watch and tend  
Their earthly charge. Of these the vigilance  
I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist  
Of midnight vapour, glide obscure, and pry  
In every bush and brake, where hap may find  
The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds  
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.  
O foul descent! that I, who erst contended  
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained  
Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,  
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,

That to the highth of deity aspired!  
But what will not ambition and revenge  
Descend to? Who aspires must down as low  
As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last,  
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,  
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.  
Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed,  
Since higher I fall short, on him who next  
Provokes my envy, this new favourite  
Of Heaven, this Man of Clay, son of despite,  
Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised  
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,  
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on  
His midnight search, where soonest he might find  
The Serpent. Him fast sleeping soon he found,  
In labyrinth of many a round self-rowled,  
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:  
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den:  
Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,  
Fearless, unfear'd, he slept. In at his mouth  
The Devil entered, and his brutal sense.  
In heart or head, possessing soon inspired  
With act intelligential; but his sleep  
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

Now, whenas sacred light began to dawn  
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed  
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe  
From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise  
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill  
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,  
And joined their vocal worship to the quire  
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake  
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs;  
Then com'mune how that day they best may ply  
Their growing work—for much their work outgrew  
The hands' dispatch of two gardening so wide:  
And Eve first to her husband thus began:—

"Adam, well may we labour still to dress  
This Garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,

Our pleasant task enjoined ; but, till more hands  
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,  
Luxurious by restraint : what we by day  
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,  
One night or two with wanton growth derides,  
Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,  
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present.  
Let us divide our labours—thou where choice  
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind  
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct  
The clasping ivy where to climb ; while I  
In yonder spring of roses intermixed  
With myrtle find what to redress till noon.  
For, while so near each other thus all day  
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near  
Looks intervene and smiles, or objects new  
Casual discourse draw on, which intermits  
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun  
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned ! ”

To whom mild answer Adam thus returned :—  
“ Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond  
Compare above all living creatures dear !  
Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts  
employed

How we might best fulfil the work which here  
God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass  
Unpraised ; for nothing lovelier can be found  
In woman than to study household good,  
And good works in her husband to promote.  
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed  
Labour as to debar us when we need  
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,  
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse  
Of looks and smiles ; for smiles from reason flow  
To brute denied, and are of love the food—  
Love, not the lowest end of human life.  
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,  
He made us, and delight to reason joined.  
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint



Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide  
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long  
Assist us. But, if much converse perhaps  
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;  
For solitude sometimes is best society,  
And short retirement urges sweet return.  
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm  
Befall thee, severed from me; for thou know'st  
What hath been warned us—what malicious foe,  
Envyng our happiness, and of his own  
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame  
By sly assault and somewhere nigh at hand  
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find  
His wish and best advantage, us asunder,  
Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each  
To other speedy aid might lend at need.  
Whether his first design be to withdraw  
Our fealty from God, or to disturb  
Conjugal love—than which perhaps no bliss  
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more—  
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side  
That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.  
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,  
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,  
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.”  
To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,  
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,  
With sweet austere composure thus replied:—  
“Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's  
lord!

That such an Enemy we have, who seeks  
Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,  
And from the parting Angel overheard,  
As in a shady nook I stood behind,  
Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.  
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt  
To God or thee, because we have a foe  
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.  
His violence thou fear'st not, being such  
As we, not capable of death or pain,

Can either not receive, or can repel.

His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers

Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love

Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced:

Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy  
breast,

Adam! misthought of her to thee so dear?"

To whom, with healing words, Adam replied:—

"Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve!—

For such thou art, from sin and blame entire—

Not diffident of thee do I dissuade

Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid

The attempt itself, intended by our Foe.

For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses

The tempted with dishonour foul, supposed

Not incorruptible of faith, not proof

Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn

And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong,

Though ineffectual found; misdeem not, then,

If such affront I labour to avert

From thee alone, which on us both at once

The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;

Or, daring, first on me the assault shall light.

Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn—

Subtle he needs must be who could seduce

Angels—nor think superfluous others' aid.

I from the influence of thy looks receive

Access in every virtue—in thy sight

More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were

Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,

Shame to be overcome or overreached,

Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.

Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel

When I am present, and thy trial choose

With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"

So spake domestic Adam in his care

And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought

Less attributed to her faith sincere,

Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:—

"If this be our condition, thus to dwell

In narrow circuit straitened by a Foe,  
Subtle or violent, we not endued  
Single with like defence wherever met,  
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?  
But harm precedes not sin: only our Foe  
Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem  
Of our integrity: his foul esteem  
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns  
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunned or feared  
By us, who rather double honour gain  
From his surmise proved false, find peace within,  
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event?  
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed  
Alone, without exterior help sustained?  
Let us not then suspect our happy state  
Left so imperfet by the Maker wise  
As not secure to single or combined.  
Frail is our happiness, if this be so;  
And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."

To whom thus Adam fervently replied:—  
"O Woman, best are all things as the will  
Of God ordained them; his creating hand  
Nothing imperfet or deficient left  
Of all that he created—much less Man,  
Or aught that might his happy state secure,  
Secure from outward force. Within himself  
The danger lies, yet lies within his power;  
Against his will he can receive no harm.  
But God left free the Will; for what obeys  
Reason is free; and Reason he made right,  
But bid her well be ware, and still erect,  
Lest, by some fair appearing good surprised,  
She dictate false, and misinform the Will  
To do what God expressly hath forbid.  
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins  
That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me,  
Firm we sub sist, yet possible to swerve,  
Since Reason not impossibly may meet  
Some specious object by the foe suborned,  
And fall into deception unaware,

Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.  
Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid  
Were better, and most likely if from me  
Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.  
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve  
First thy obedience; the other who can know,  
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?  
But, if thou think trial unsought may find  
Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,  
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.  
Go in thy native innocence; rely  
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all;  
For God towards thee hath done his part: do thine."

So spake the Patriarch of Mankind; but Eve  
Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:—

"With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,  
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words  
Touched only, that our trial, when least sought,  
May find us both perhaps far less prepared,  
The willinger I go, nor much expect  
A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek;  
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand  
Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light,  
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,  
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self  
In gait surpassed and goddess-like deport,  
Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,  
But with such gardening tools as Art, yet rude,  
Guiltless of fire had formed, or Angels brought.  
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,  
Likest she seemed—Pomona when she fled  
Vertumnus—or to Ceres in her prime,  
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.  
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued  
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.  
Oft he to her his charge of quick return  
Repeated; she to him as oft engaged  
To be returned by noon amid the bower,  
And all things in best order to invite

Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.  
O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,  
Of thy presumed return! event perverse!  
Thou never from that hour in Paradise  
Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose;  
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,  
Waited, with hellish rancour imminent,  
To intercept thy way, or send thee back  
Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.  
For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,  
Mere Serpent in appearance, forth was come,  
And on his quest where likeliest he might find  
The only two of mankind, but in them  
The whole included race, his purposed prey.  
In bower and field he sought, where any tuft  
Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,  
Their tendance or plantation for delight;  
By fountain or by shady rivulet  
He sought them both, but wished his hap might find  
Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope  
Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,  
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,  
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,  
Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round  
About her glowed, oft stooping to support  
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay  
Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,  
Hung drooping unsustained. Them she upstays  
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while  
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,  
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.  
Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed  
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;  
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen  
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers  
Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve:  
Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned  
Or of revived Adonis, or renowned  
Alcinoüs, host of old Laertes' son,  
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king

Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.  
Much he the place admired, the person more.  
As one who, long in populous city pent,  
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,  
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe  
Among the pleasant villages and farms  
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight—  
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,  
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound—  
If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,  
What pleasing seemed for her now pleases more,  
She most, and in her look sums all delight:  
Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold  
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve  
Thus early, thus alone. Her heavenly form  
Angelic, but more soft and feminine,  
Her graceful innocence, her every air  
Of gesture or least action, overawed  
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved  
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.  
That space the Evil One abstracted stood  
From his own evil, and for the time remained  
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,  
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.  
But the hot hell that always in him burns,  
Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,  
And tortures him now more, the more he sees  
Of pleasure not for him ordained. Then soon  
Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts  
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:—

“Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what  
sweet

Compulsion thus transported to forget  
What hither brought us? hate, not love, nor hope  
Of Paradise for Hell, here to taste  
Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,  
Save what is in destroying; other joy  
To me is lost. Then let me not let pass  
Occasion which now smiles. Behold alone  
The Woman, opportune to all attempts—



Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,  
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,  
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb  
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;  
Foe not formidable, exempt from wound—  
I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain  
Infeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.  
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods,  
Not terrible, though terror be in love,  
And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,  
Hate stronger under show of love well feigned—  
The way which to her ruin now I tend.”

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed  
In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve  
Addressed his way—not with indented wave,  
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,  
Circular base of rising folds, that towered  
Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head  
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;  
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect  
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass  
Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape  
And lovely; never since the serpent kind  
Lovelier—not those that in Illyria changed  
Hermione and Cadmus, or the God  
In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed  
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,  
He with Olympias, this with her who bore  
Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique  
At first, as one who sought access but feared  
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.  
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought  
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the  
wind

Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,  
So varied he, and of his tortuous train  
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,  
To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound  
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used  
To such disport before her through the field

From every beast, more duteous at her call  
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.  
He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,  
But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed  
His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck,  
Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.  
His gentle dumb expression turned at length  
The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad  
Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue  
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,  
His fraudulent temptation thus began:—

“Wonder not, sovran mistress (if perhaps  
Thou canst who art sole wonder), much less arm  
Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,  
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze  
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared  
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.  
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,  
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine  
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore,  
With ravishment beheld—there best beheld  
Where universally admired. But here,  
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,  
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern  
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,  
Who sees thee (and what is one?) who shouldst  
be seen

A Goddess among Gods, adored and served  
By Angels numberless, thy daily train?”

So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned.  
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,  
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,  
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:—

“What may this mean? Language of Man pronounced

By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed!  
The first at least of these I thought denied  
To beasts, whom God on their creation-day  
Created mute to all articulate sound;  
The latter I demur, for in their looks

Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.  
Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field  
I knew, but not with human voice endued;  
Redouble, then, this miracle, and say,  
How can'st thou speakable of mute, and how  
To me so friendly grown above the rest  
Of brutal kind that daily are in sight:  
Say, for such wonder claims attention due."

To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:—  
"Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve!  
Easy to me it is to tell thee all  
What thou command'st, and right thou shouldst  
be obeyed.

I was at first as other beasts that graze  
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,  
As was my food, nor aught but food discerned  
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:  
Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced  
A goodly tree far distant to behold,  
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixed,  
Ruddy and gold. I nearer drew to gaze;  
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,  
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense  
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats  
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,  
Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.  
To satisfy the sharp desire I had  
Of tasting those fair Apples, I resolved  
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,  
Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent  
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.  
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;  
For, high from ground, the branches would  
require

Thy utmost reach, or Adam's; round the Tree  
All other beasts that saw, with like desire  
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.  
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung  
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill  
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour

At feed or fountain never had I found.  
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive  
Strange alteration in me, to degree  
Of Reason in my inward powers, and Speech  
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.  
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep  
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind  
Considered all things visible in Heaven,  
Or Earth, or Middle, all things fair and good.  
But all that fair and good in thy divine  
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,  
United I beheld—no fair to thine  
Equivalent or second; which compelled  
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come  
And gaze, and worship thee of right declared  
Sovran of creatures, universal Dame!”

So talked the spirited sly Snake; and Eve,  
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:—

“Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt  
The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first proved.  
But say, where grows the Tree? from hence how  
far?

For many are the trees of God that grow  
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown  
To us; in such abundance lies our choice  
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,  
Still hanging incorruptible, till men  
Grow up to their provision, and more hands  
Help to disburden Nature of her bearth.”

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad;—  
“Empress, the way is ready, and not long—  
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,  
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past  
Of blowing myrrh and balm. If thou accept  
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.”

“Lead, then,” said Eve. He, leading, swiftly  
rowled

In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,  
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy  
Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,

Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night  
Condenses, and the cold invirons round,  
Kindled through agitation to a flame  
(Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends),  
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,  
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way  
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,  
There swallowed up and lost, from succour far:  
So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud  
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the Tree  
Of Prohibition, root of all our woe;  
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she  
spake:—

“Serpent, we might have spared our coming  
hither,

Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,  
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee—  
Wondrous, indeed, if cause of such effects!  
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;  
God so commanded, and left that command  
Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live  
Law to ourselves; our Reason is our Law.”

To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:—  
“Indeed! Hath God then said that of the fruit  
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,  
Yet lords declared of all in Earth or Air?”

To whom thus Eve, yet sinless:—“Of the fruit  
Of each tree in the garden we may eat;  
But of the fruit of this fair Tree, amidst  
The Garden, God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat  
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.’”

She scarce had said, though brief, when now **more**  
**bold**

The Tempter, but, with shew of zeal and love  
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,  
New part puts on, and, as to passion moved,  
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act  
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.  
As when of old some orator renowned  
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence

Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,  
Stood in himself collected, while each part,  
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue  
Sometimes in highth began, as no delay  
Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:  
So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,  
The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:—  
“O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,  
Mother of science! now I feel thy power  
Within me clear, not only to discern  
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways  
Of highest agents, deemed however wise.  
Queen of this Universe! do not believe  
Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die.  
How should ye? By the Fruit? it gives you life  
To knowledge. By the Threatener? look on me,  
Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,  
And life more perfect have attained than Fate  
Meant me, by ventring higher than my lot.  
Shall that be shut to Man which to the Beast  
Is open? or will God incense his ire  
For such a petty trespass, and not praise  
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain  
Of death denounced, whatever thing Death be,  
Deterred not from achieving what might lead  
To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil?  
Of good, how just! of evil—if what is evil  
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?  
God, therefore, cannot hurt ye and be just;  
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:  
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.  
Why, then, was this forbid? Why but to awe,  
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,  
His worshipers? He knows that in the day  
Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear,  
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then  
Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,  
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.  
That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man,  
Internal Man, is but proportion meet—



I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.  
So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off  
Human, to put on Gods—death to be wished,  
Though threatened, which no worse than this can  
bring!

And what are Gods, that Man may not become  
As they, participating godlike food?  
The Gods are first, and that advantage use  
On our belief, that all from them proceeds.  
I question it; for this fair Earth I see,  
Warmed by the Sun, producing every kind;  
Them nothing. If they all things, who enclosed  
Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree,  
That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains  
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies  
The offence, that Man should thus attain to know?  
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree  
Impart against his will, if all be his?  
Or is it envy? and can envy dwell  
In Heavenly breasts? These, these and many more  
Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.  
Goddess humane, reach, then, and freely taste!"

He ended; and his words, replete with guile,  
Into her heart too easy entrance won.  
Fixed on the Fruit she gazed, which to behold  
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound  
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd  
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.  
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked  
An eager appetite, raised by the smell  
So savoury of that Fruit, which with desire,  
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,  
Solicited her longing eye; yet first,  
Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:—

"Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of Fruits,  
Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admired,  
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay  
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught  
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.  
Thy praise he also who forbids thy use

Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree  
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of Good and Evil;  
Forbids us then to taste. But his forbidding  
Commends thee more, while it infers the good  
By thee communicated, and our want;  
For good unknown sure is not bad, or, had  
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.  
In plain, then, what forbids he but to know?  
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise!  
Such prohibitions bind not. But, if Death  
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then  
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat  
Of this fair Fruit, our doom is we shall die!  
How dies the Serpent? He hath eaten, and lives,  
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,  
Irrational till then. For us alone  
Was death invented? or to us denied  
This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?  
For beasts it seems; yet that one beast which first  
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy  
The good befallen him, author unsuspect,  
Friendly to Man, far from deceit or guile.  
What fear I, then? rather, what know to fear  
Under this ignorance of Good and Evil,  
Of God or Death, of law or penalty?  
Here grows the cure of all, this Fruit divine,  
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,  
Of virtue to make wise. What hinders, then,  
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth-reaching to the Fruit, she plucked, she eat.  
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe  
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk  
The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve,  
Intent now only on her taste, naught else  
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,  
In fruit she never tasted, whether true,  
Or fancied so through expectation high  
Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought.

Greedily she ingorged without restraint,  
And knew not eating death. Sate at length,  
And hightened as with wine, jocond and boon,  
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:—

“O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees  
In Paradise! of operation blest  
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,  
And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end  
Created! but henceforth my early care,  
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,  
Shall tend thee, and th<sup>e</sup> fertil burden ease  
Of thy full branches, offered free to all;  
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature  
In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know.  
Though others envy what they cannot give—  
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here  
Thus grown! Experience, next to thee I owe,  
Best guide: not following thee, I had remained  
In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,  
And giv'st access, though secret she retire.  
And I perhaps am secret: Heaven is high—  
High, and remote to see from thence distinct  
Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps  
May have diverted from continual watch  
Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies  
About him. But to Adam in what sort  
Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known  
'As yet my change, and give him to partake  
Full happiness with me, or rather not,  
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power  
Without copartner? so to add what wants  
In female sex, the more to draw his love,  
And render me more equal, and perhaps—  
A thing not undesirable—sometime  
Superior; for, inferior, who is free?  
This may be well; but what if God have seen,  
And death ensue? Then I shall be no more;  
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,  
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct!  
A death to think! Confirmed, then, I resolve

Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe.  
So dear I love him that with him all deaths  
I could endure, without him live no life."

So saying, from the Tree her step she turned,  
But first low reverence done, as to the Power  
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused  
Into the plant sciential sap, derived  
From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,  
Waiting desirous her return, had wove  
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn  
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown,  
As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.  
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new  
Solace in her return, so long delayed;  
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,  
Mishave him. He the faltering measure felt,  
And forth to meet her went, the way she took  
That morn when first they parted. By the Tree  
Of Knowledge he must pass; there he her met,  
Scarce from the Tree returning; in her hand  
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,  
New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.  
To him she hasted; in her face excuse  
Came prologue, and apology to prompt,  
Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:—

"Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?  
Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived  
Thy presence—agony of love till now  
Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more  
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,  
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange  
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear.  
This Tree is not, as we are told, a Tree  
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown  
Opening the way, but of divine effect  
To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste;  
And hath been tasted such. The Serpent wise,  
Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,  
Hath eaten of the Fruit, and is become  
Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth

Endued with human voice and human sense,  
Reasoning to admiration, and with me  
Persuasively hath so prevailed that I  
Have also tasted, and have also found  
The effects to correspond—opener mine eyes,  
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,  
And growing up to Godhead; which for thee  
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.  
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;  
Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.  
Thou, therefore, also taste, that equal lot  
May join us, equal joy, as equal love;  
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree  
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce  
Deity for thee, when fate will not permit.”

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;  
But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.  
On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard  
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,  
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill  
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.  
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve  
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed.  
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length  
First to himself he inward silence broke:—

“O fairest of Creation, last and best  
Of all God’s works, creature in whom excelled  
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,  
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!  
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,  
Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!  
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress  
The strict forbiddance, how to violate  
The sacred Fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud  
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,  
And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee  
Certain my resolution is to die.  
How can I live without thee? how forgo  
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,  
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?

Should God create another Eve, and I  
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee  
Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel  
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,  
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state  
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay  
Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturbed,  
Submitting to what seemed remediless,  
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:—

"Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,  
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared  
Had it been only coveting to eye  
That sacred Food, sacred to abstinence;  
Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.  
But past who can recall, or done undo?  
Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate! Yet so  
Perhaps thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact  
Is not so hainous now—foretasted Fruit,  
Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first  
Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,  
Nor yet on him found deadly. He yet lives—  
Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,  
Higher degree of life: inducement strong  
To us, as likely, tasting, to attain  
Proportional ascent; which cannot be  
But to be Gods, or Angels, Demi-gods.  
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,  
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy  
Us, his prime creatures, dignified so high,  
Set over all his works; which, in our fall,  
For us created, needs with us must fail,  
Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,  
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose—  
Not well conceived of God; who, though his power  
Creation could repeat, yet would be loth  
Us to abolish, lest the Adversary  
Triumph and say: 'Fickle their state whom God  
Most favours; who can please him long? Me first  
He ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?'—



Matter of scorn not to be given the Foe.  
However, I with thee have fixed my lot,  
Certain to undergo like doom. If death  
Consort with thee, death is to me as life;  
So forcible within my heart I feel  
The bond of Nature draw me to my own—  
My own is thee; for what thou art is mine.  
Our state cannot be severed; we are one,  
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.”

So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:—  
“O glorious trial of exceeding love,  
Illustrious evidence, example high!  
Engaging me to emulate; but, short  
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,  
Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,  
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,  
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof  
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,  
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,  
Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,  
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,  
If any be, of tasting this fair Fruit;  
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,  
Direct, or by occasion) hath presented  
This happy trial of thy love, which else  
So eminently never had been known.  
Were it I thought death menaced would ensue  
This my attempt, I would sustain alone  
The worst, and not persuade thee—rather die  
Deserted than oblige thee with a fact  
Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured  
Remarkably so late of thy so true,  
So faithful love unequalled. But I feel  
Far otherwise the event—not death, but life  
Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,  
Taste so divine that what of sweet before  
Hath touched my sense flat seems to this and harsh.  
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,  
And fear of death deliver to the winds.”

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy

Tenderly wept, much won that he his love  
Had so ennobled as of choice to incur  
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.  
In recompense (for such compliance bad  
Such recompense best merits), from the bough  
She gave him of that fair enticing Fruit  
With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,  
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,  
But fondly overcome with female charm.  
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again  
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;  
Sky loured, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops  
Wept at completing of the mortal Sin  
Original; while Adam took no thought,  
Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate  
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe  
Him with her loved society; that now,  
As with new wine intoxicated both,  
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel  
Divinity within them breeding wings  
Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false Fruit  
Far other operation first displayed,  
Carnal desire inflaming. He on Eve  
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him  
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn,  
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:—

“Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste  
And elegant—of sapience no small part;  
Since to each meaning savour we apply,  
And palate call judicious. I the praise  
Yield thee; so well this day thou hast purveyed.  
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained  
From this delightful Fruit, nor known till now  
True relish, tasting. If such pleasure be  
In things to us forbidden, it might be wished  
For this one Tree had been forbidden ten.  
But come; so well refreshed, now let us play,  
As meet is, after such delicious fare;  
For never did thy beauty, since the day  
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned

With all perfections, so enflame my sense  
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now  
Than ever—bounty of this virtuous Tree!”

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy  
Of amorous intent, well understood  
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.  
Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,  
Thick overhead with verdant roof imbowered,  
He led her, nothing loth; flowers were the couch,  
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,  
And hyacinth—Earth’s freshest, softest lap.  
There they their fill of love and love’s disport  
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,  
The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep  
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,  
That with exhilarating vapour bland  
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers  
Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,  
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams  
Incumbered, now had left them, up they rose  
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,  
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds  
How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil  
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;  
Just confidence, and native righteousness,  
And honour, from about them, naked left  
To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe  
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,  
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap  
Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked  
Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare  
Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face  
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute;  
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,  
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:—

“O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear  
To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught  
To counterfeit Man’s voice—true in our fall,  
False in our promised rising; since our eyes

Opened we find indeed, and find we know  
Both good and evil, good lost and evil got:  
Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,  
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,  
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,  
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,  
And in our faces evident the signs  
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,  
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first  
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face  
Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy  
And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heavenly Shapes  
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze  
Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here  
In solitude live savage, in some glade  
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable  
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,  
And brown as evening. Cover me, ye pines!  
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs  
Hide me, where I may never see them more!  
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise  
What best may, for the present, serve to hide  
The parts of each other that seem most  
To shame obnoxious, and unseenliest seen—  
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sewed,  
And girded on our loins, may cover round  
Those middle parts, that this new comer, Shame,  
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”

So counselled he, and both together went  
Into the thickest wood. There soon they choose  
The fig tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,  
But such as, at this day, to Indians known,  
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms  
Braunching so broad and long that in the ground  
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow  
About the mother tree, a pillared shade  
High overarched, and echoing walks between:  
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,  
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds  
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those leaves

They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,  
And with what skill they had together sewed,  
To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide  
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike  
To that first naked glory! Such of late  
Columbus found the American, so girt  
With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,  
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.  
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part  
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,  
They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears  
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within  
Began to rise, high passions—anger, hate,  
Mistrust, suspicion, discord—and shook sore  
Their inward state of mind, calm region once  
And full of peace, now tost and turbulent:  
For Understanding ruled not, and the Will  
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now  
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath  
Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed  
Superior sway. From thus distempered breast  
Adam, estranged in look and altered style,  
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:—  
“Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed  
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange  
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,  
I know not whence possessed thee! We had then  
Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled  
Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!  
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve  
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek  
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.”

To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus  
Eve:—

“What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe?  
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will  
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows  
But might as ill have happened thou being by,  
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,  
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned

Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;  
No ground of enmity between us known  
Why he should mean me ill or seek to harm.  
Was I to have never parted from thy side?  
As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.  
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the Head,  
Command me absolutely not to go,  
Going into such danger, as thou saidst?  
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,  
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.  
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,  
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me."

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:—  
"Is this the love, is this the recompense  
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed  
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I—  
Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,  
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?  
And am I now upbraided as the cause  
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,  
It seems, in thy restraint! What could I more?  
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold  
The danger, and the lurking Enemy  
That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,  
And force upon free will hath here no place.  
But confidence then bore thee on, secure  
Either to meet no danger, or to find  
Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps  
I also erred in overmuch admiring  
What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought  
No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue  
That error now, which is become my crime,  
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall  
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,  
Lest her will rule: restraint she will not brook;  
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,  
She first his weak indulgence will accuse."

Thus they in mutual accusation spent  
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;  
And of their vain contest' appeared no end.



## THE TENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—Man's transgression known, the guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the Transgressors; who descends, and gives sentence accordingly; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of Man: to make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a shew of the Forbidden Tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the Fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death: God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him: then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways; which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the Serpent, and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the hainous and despiteful act  
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how  
He, in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,  
Her husband she, to taste the fatal Fruit,  
Was known in Heaven; for what can scape the eye  
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart  
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,  
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind  
Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed  
Complete to have discovered and repulsed  
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.

For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,  
The high injunction not to taste that Fruit,  
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying  
Incurred (what could they less?) the penalty,  
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.  
Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste  
The Angelic Guards ascended, mute and sad  
For Man; for of his state by this they knew,  
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen  
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news  
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased  
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare  
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed  
With pity, violated not their bliss.  
About the new-arrived in multitudes,  
The Ethereal People ran, to hear and know  
How all befell. They towards the Throne supreme,  
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,  
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,  
And easily approved; when the Most High,  
Eternal Father, from his secret Cloud  
Amidst, in thunder uttered thus his voice:—

“ Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned  
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed  
Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,  
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,  
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,  
When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.  
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed  
On his bad errand—Man should be seduced,  
And flattered out of all, believing lies  
Against his Maker; no decree of mine,  
Concurring to necessitate his fall,  
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse  
His free will, to her own inclining left  
In even scale. But fallen he is; and now  
What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass  
On his transgression, Death denounced that day?  
Which he presumes already vain and void,  
Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,

By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find  
Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.  
Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.  
But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee,  
Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred  
All judgment, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.  
Easy it may be seen that I intend  
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,  
Man's Friend, his Mediator, his designed  
Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntary,  
And destined Man himself to judge Man fallen."

So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright  
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son  
Blazed forth unclouded deity. He full  
Resplendent all his Father manifest  
Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:—

"Father Eternal, thine is to decree;  
Mine both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will  
Supreme, that thou in me, thy Son beloved,  
May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge  
On Earth these thy transgressors; but thou know'st,  
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,  
When time shall be; for so I undertook  
Before thee, and, not repenting, this obtain  
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom  
On me derived. Yet I shall temper so  
Justice with mercy as may illustrate most  
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.  
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none  
Are to behold the judgment but the judged,  
Those two; the third best absent is condemned,  
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law;  
Conviction to the Serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant Seat he rose  
Of high collateral glory. Him Thrones and Powers,  
Princdoms, and Dominations ministrant,  
Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence  
Eden and all the coast in prospect lay.  
Down he descended straight; the speed of Gods  
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.

Now was the Sun in western cadence low  
From noon, and gentle airs due at their hour  
To fan the Earth now waked, and usher in  
The evening cool, when he, from wrauth more cool,  
Came, the mild Judge and Intercessor both,  
To sentence Man. The voice of God they heard  
Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds  
Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,  
And from his presence hid themselves among  
The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,  
Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:—

“Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet  
My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here,  
Not pleased thus entertained, with solitude,  
Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.  
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change  
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!”

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though first  
To offend, discountenanced both, and discomposed.  
Love was not in their looks, either to God  
Or to each other, but apparent guilt,  
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,  
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.  
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief:—

“I heard thee in the Garden, and, of thy voice  
Afraid, being naked, hid myself.” To whom  
The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:—

“My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,  
But still rejoiced; how is it now become  
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked who  
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the Tree  
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?”  
To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied:—

“O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand  
Before my Judge—either to undergo  
Myself the total crime, or to accuse  
My other self, the partner of my life,  
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,  
I should conceal, and not expose to blame  
By my complaint. But strict necessity

Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,  
Lest on my head both sin and punishment,  
However insupportable, be all  
Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou  
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.  
This Woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,  
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,  
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,  
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,  
And what she did, whatever in itself,  
Her doing seemed to justify the deed—  
She gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.”  
To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied:—  
“Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey  
Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,  
Superior, or but equal, that to her  
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place  
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee  
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled  
Hers in all real dignity? Adorned  
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract  
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts  
Were such as under government well seemed—  
Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part  
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.”  
So having said, he thus to Eve in few:—  
“Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?”  
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,  
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge  
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:—  
“The Serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.”  
Which when the Lord God heard, without delay  
To judgment he proceeded on the accused  
Serpent, though brute, unable to transfer  
The guilt on him who made him instrument  
Of mischief, and polluted from the end  
Of his creation—justly then accursed,  
As vitiated in nature. More to know  
Concerned not Man (since he no further knew),  
Nor altered his offence; yet God at last

To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied,  
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best;  
And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall:—

“Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed  
Above all cattle, each beast of the field;  
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,  
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.  
Between thee and the Woman I will put  
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;  
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.”

So spake this oracle—then verified  
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,  
Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,  
Prince of the Air; then, rising from his grave,  
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed  
In open shew, and, with ascension bright,  
Captivity led captive through the Air,  
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,  
Whom He shall tread at last under our feet,  
Even He who now foretold his fatal bruise,  
And to the Woman thus his sentence turned:—

“Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply  
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring  
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband’s will  
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.”

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:—  
“Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,  
And eaten of the Tree concerning which  
I charged thee, saying, *Thou shalt not eat thereof*,  
Curs’d is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow  
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;  
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth  
Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;  
In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,  
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou  
Out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth,  
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.”

So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,  
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,  
Removed far off; then, pitying how they stood



Before him naked to the air, that now  
Must suffer change, disdained not to begin  
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume.  
As when he washed his servants' feet, so now,  
As Father of his family, he clad  
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,  
Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid;  
And thought not much to clothe his enemies.  
Nor he their outward only with the skins  
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more  
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness  
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.  
To him with swift ascent he up returned,  
Into his blissful bosom reassumed  
In glory as of old; to him, appeased,  
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with Man  
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on Earth,  
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,  
In counterview within the gates, that now  
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame  
Far into Chaos, since the Fiend passed through,  
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:—

“O Son, why sit we here, each other viewing  
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives  
In other worlds, and happier seat provides  
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be  
But that success attends him; if mishap,  
Ere this he had returned, with fury driven  
By his Avengers, since no place like this  
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.  
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,  
Wings growing, and dominion given me large  
Beyond this Deep—whatever draws me on,  
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,  
Powerful at greatest distance to unite  
With secret amity things of like kind  
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade  
Inseparable, must with me along;  
For Death from Sin no power can separate.

But, lest the difficulty of passing back  
Stay his return perhaps over this gulf  
Impassable, impervious, let us try  
(Adventrous work, yet to thy power and mine  
Not unagreeable!) to found a path  
Over this Main from Hell to that new World  
Where Satan now prevails—a monument  
Of merit high to all the infernal Host,  
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse  
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.  
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn  
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.”

Whom thus the meagre Shadow answered soon:—  
“Go whither fate and inclination strong  
Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err  
The way, thou leading: such a scent I draw  
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste  
The savour of death from all things there that live.  
Nor shall I do the work thou enterprisest  
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.”

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell  
Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock  
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,  
Against the day of battle, to a field  
Where armies lie encamped come flying, lured  
With scent of living carcasses designed  
For death the following day in bloody fight;  
So scented the grim Feature, and upturned  
His nostril wide into the murky air,  
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.  
Then both, from out Hell-gates, into the waste  
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,  
Flew diverse, and, with power (their power was  
great)

Hovering upon the waters, what they met  
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea  
Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,  
From each side shoaling, towards the mouth of Hell;  
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse  
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive

Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way  
Beyond Petsora eastward to the rich  
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil  
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,  
As with a trident smote, and fixed as firm  
As Delos, floating once; the rest his look  
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move,  
And with asphaltic slime; broad as the gate,  
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach  
They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on  
Over the foaming Deep high-arched, a bridge  
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall  
Immovable of this now fenceless World,  
Forfeit to Death—from hence a passage broad,  
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.  
So, if great things to small may be compared,  
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,  
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,  
Came to the sea, and, over Hellespont  
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,  
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.  
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art  
Pontifical—a ridge of pendent rock  
Over the vexed Abyss, following the track  
Of Satan, to the self-same place where he  
First lighted from his wing and landed safe  
From out of Chaos—to the outside bare  
Of this round World. With pins of adamant  
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made  
And durable; and now in little space  
The confines met of empyrean Heaven  
And of this World, and on the left hand Hell,  
With long reach interposed; three several ways  
In sight of each of these three places led.  
And now their way to Earth they had descried,  
To Paradise first tending, when, behold  
Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,  
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering  
His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose!  
Disguised he came; but those his children dear

Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.  
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk  
Into the wood fast by, and, changing shape  
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act  
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded  
Upon her husband—saw their shame that sought  
Vain covertures; but, when he saw descend  
The Son of God to judge them, terrified  
He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun  
The present—fearing, guilty, what his wrauth  
Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned  
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair  
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,  
Thence gathered his own doom; which understood  
Not instant, but of future time, with joy  
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,  
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot  
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped  
Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.  
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight  
Of that stupendious bridge his joy encreased.  
Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair  
Inchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:—

“O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,  
Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own;  
Thou art their Author and prime Architect.  
For I no sooner in my heart divined  
(My heart, which by a secret harmony  
Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet)  
That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks  
Now also evidence, but straight I felt—  
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt—  
That I must after thee with this thy son;  
Such fatal consequence unites us three.  
Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,  
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure  
Detain from following thy illustrious track.  
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined  
Within Hell-gates till now; thou us impowered  
To fortify thus far, and overlay

With this portentous bridge the dark Abyss.  
Thine now is all this World; thy virtue hath won  
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained,  
With odds, what war hath lost, and fully avenged  
Our foil in Heaven. Here thou shalt Monarch reign,  
There didst not; there let him still victor sway,  
As battle hath adjudged, from this new World  
Retiring, by his own doom alienated,  
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide  
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,  
His quadrature, from thy orbicular World,  
Or try thee now more dangerous to his Throne."

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered glad:—  
"Fair daughter, and thou, son and grandchild both,  
High proof ye now have given to be the race  
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,  
Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King),  
Amplly have merited of me, of all  
The Infernal Empire, that so near Heaven's door  
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,  
Mine with this glorious work, and made one realm  
Hell and this World—one realm, one continent  
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I  
Descend through Darkness, on your road with ease,  
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint  
With these successes, and with them rejoice  
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,  
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;  
There dwell and reign in bliss; thence on the Earth  
Dominion exercise and in the air,  
Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared;  
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.  
My substitutes I send ye, and create  
Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might  
Issuing from me. On your joint vigour now  
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,  
Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.  
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell  
No detriment need fear; go, and be strong."

So saying, he dismissed them; they with speed

Their course through thickest constellations held,  
Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,  
And planets, planet-strook, real eclipse  
Then suffered. The other way Satan went down  
The causeway to Hell-gate; on either side  
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,  
And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,  
That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,  
Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,  
And all about found desolate; for those  
Appointed to sit there had left their charge,  
Flown to the upper World; the rest were all  
Far to the inland retired, about the walls  
Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat  
Of Lucifer, so by allusion called  
Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.  
There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand  
In council sat, solicitous what chance  
Might intercept their Emperor sent; so he  
Departing gave command, and they observed.  
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,  
By Astracan, over the snowy plains,  
Retires, or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns  
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond  
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat  
To Tauris or Casbeen; so these, the late  
Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell  
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch  
Round their Metropolis, and now expecting  
Each hour their great Adventurer from the search  
Of foreign worlds. He through the midst unmarked,  
In shew plebeian Angel militant  
Of lowest order, passed, and, from the door  
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible  
Ascended his high Throne, which, under state  
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end  
Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while  
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen.  
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head  
And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad



With what permissive glory since his fall  
Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed  
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng  
Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,  
Their mighty Chief returned: loud was the acclaim.  
Forth rushed in haste the great consulting Peers,  
Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy  
Congratulant approached him, who with hand  
Silence, and with these words attention, won:—  
“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,  
Powers!—

For in possession such, not only of right,  
I call ye, and declare ye now, returned,  
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth  
Triumphant out of this infernal Pit  
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,  
And dungeon of our tyrant! Now possess,  
As lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven  
Little inferior, by my adventure hard  
With peril great achieved. Long were to tell  
What I have done, what suffered, with what pain  
Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded Deep  
Of horrible confusion—over which  
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,  
To expedite your glorious march; but I  
Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride  
The untractable Abyss, plunged in the womb  
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild,  
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed  
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar  
Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found  
The new-created World, which fame in Heaven  
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful,  
Of absolute perfection; therein Man  
Placed in a Paradise, by our exile  
Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced  
From his Creator, and, the more to increase  
Your wonder, with an apple! He, thereat  
Offended—worth your laughter!—hath given up  
Both his beloved Man and all his World

To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,  
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,  
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man  
To rule, as over all he should have ruled.  
True is, me also he hath judged; or rather  
Me not, but the brute Serpent, in whose shape  
Man I deceived. That which to me belongs  
Is enmity, which he will put between  
Me and Mankind: I am to bruise his heel;  
His seed—when is not set—shall bruise my head!  
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,  
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account  
Of my performance; what remains, ye Gods,  
But up and enter now into full bliss?"

So having said, a while he stood, expecting  
Their universal shout and high applause  
To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears,  
On all sides, from innumerable tongues  
A dismal universal hiss, the sound  
Of public scorn. He wondered, but not long  
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more.  
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,  
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining  
Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,  
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,  
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater power  
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,  
According to his doom. He would have spoke,  
But hiss for hiss returned with forkèd tongue  
To forkèd tongue; for now were all transformed  
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories  
To his bold riot. Dreadful was the din  
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now  
With complicated monsters, head and tail—  
Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,  
Cerastes horned, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,  
And Dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil  
Bedropt with blood of Gordon, or the isle  
Ophiusa); but still greatest the midst,  
Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the Sun

Ingendered in the Pythian vale on slime,  
Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed  
Above the rest still to retain. They all  
Him followed, issuing forth to the open field,  
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,  
Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array,  
Sublime with expectation when to see  
In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief.  
They saw, but other sight instead—a crowd  
Of ugly serpents! Horror on them fell,  
And horrid sympathy; for what they saw  
They felt themselves now changing. Down their arms,  
Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast,  
And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form  
Caught by contagion, like in punishment  
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant  
Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame  
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There  
stood

A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,  
His will who reigns above, to aggravate  
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that  
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve  
Used by the Tempter. On that prospect strange  
Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining  
For one forbidden tree a multitude  
Now risen, to work them furdur woe or shame;  
Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce  
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,  
But on they rowled in heaps, and, up the trees  
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks  
That curled Megæra. Greedily they plucked  
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew  
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed;  
This, more delusive, not the touch, but taste  
Deceived; they fondly thinking to allay  
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit  
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste  
With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed,  
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,

With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws  
With soot and cinder filled; so oft they fell  
Into the same illusion, not as Man  
Whom they triumphed' once lapsed. Thus were they  
plagued,

And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,  
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed—  
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo  
This annual humbling certain numbered days,  
To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduced.  
However, some tradition they dispersed  
Among the Heathen of their purchase got,  
And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called  
Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-  
Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule  
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven  
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair  
Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power before  
Once actual, now in body, and to dwell  
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,  
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet  
On his pale horse; to whom Sin thus began:—

“Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!  
What think'st thou of our empire now? though earned  
With travail difficult, not better far  
Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,  
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?”

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answered soon:—  
“To me, who with eternal famine pine,  
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven—  
There best where most with ravin I may meet:  
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems  
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corpse.”

To whom the incestuous Mother thus replied:—  
“Thou, therefore, on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,  
Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl—  
No homely morsels; and whatever thing  
The scythe of Time mows down devour unspared;  
Till I, in Man residing through the race,

His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,  
And season him thy last and sweetest prey."

This said, they both betook them several ways,  
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make  
All kinds, and for destruction to mature  
Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,  
From his transcendent Seat the Saints among,  
To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice:—

"See with what heat these dogs of Hell advance  
To waste and havoc yonder World, which I  
So fair and good created, and had still  
Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man  
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute  
Folly to me (so doth the Prince of Hell  
And his adherents), that with so much ease  
I suffer them to enter and possess  
A place so heavenly, and, conniving, seem  
To gratify my scornful enemies,  
That laugh, as if, transported with some fit  
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,  
At random yielded up to their misrule;  
And know not that I called and drew them thither,  
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth  
Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed  
On what was pure; till, crammed and gorged, nigh burst  
With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling  
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,  
Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last  
Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell  
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.  
Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, shall be made pure  
To sanctity that shall receive no stain:  
Till then the curse pronounced on both precedes."

He ended, and the Heavenly Audience loud  
Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,  
Through multitude that sung:—"Just are thy ways,  
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works;  
Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,  
Destined restorer of Mankind, by whom  
New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,

Or down from Heaven descend." Such was their song,  
While the Creator, calling forth by name  
His mighty Angels, gave them several charge,  
As sorted best with present things. The Sun  
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,  
As might affect the Earth with cold and heat  
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call  
Decrepit winter, from the south to bring  
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon  
Her office they prescribed; to the other five  
Their planetary motions and aspects',  
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,  
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join  
In synod unbenign; and taught the fixed  
Their influence malignant when to shower—  
Which of them, rising with the Sun or falling,  
Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set  
Their corners, when with bluster to confound  
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll  
With terror through the dark aerial hall.  
Some say he bid his Angels turn askance  
The poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more  
From the Sun's axle; they with labour pushed  
Oblique the centric Globe: some say the Sun  
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road  
Like distant breadth—to Taurus with the seven  
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,  
Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amain  
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,  
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change  
Of seasons to each clime. Else had the spring  
Perpetual smiles on Earth with vernant flowers,  
Equal in days and nights, except to those  
Beyond the polar circles; to them day  
Had unbenighted shon, while the low Sun,  
To recompense his distance, in their sight  
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known  
Or east or west—which had forbid the snow  
From cold Estotiland, and south as far  
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted Fruit,



The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned  
His course intended; else how had the world  
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now  
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?  
These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced  
Like change on sea and land—sidereal blast,  
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,  
Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north  
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,  
Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,  
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,  
Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud  
And Thrascias rend the woods, and seas upturn;  
With adverse blasts upturns them from the south  
Notus and Afer, black with thundrous clouds  
From Serrationa; thwart of these, as fierce  
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,  
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,  
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began  
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,  
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational  
Death introduced through fierce antipathy.  
Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,  
And fish with fish. To graze the herb all leaving  
Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe  
Of Man, but fled him, or with countenance grim  
Glared on him passing. These were from without  
The growing miseries; which Adam saw  
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,  
To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,  
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,  
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:—  
“O miserable of happy! Is this the end  
Of this new glorious World, and me so late  
The glory of that glory? who now, become  
Accursed of blessèd, hide me from the face  
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth  
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end  
The misery! I deserved it, and would bear  
My own deservings. But this will not serve:

All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,  
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard  
Delightfully, '*Encrease and multiply,*'  
Now death to hear! for what can I encrease  
Or multiply but curses on my head?  
Who, of all ages to succeed, but, feeling  
The evil on him brought by me, will curse  
My head? 'Ill fare our Ancestor impure!  
For this we may thank Adam!' but his thanks  
Shall be the execration. So, besides  
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me  
Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—  
On me, as on their natural centre, light;  
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys  
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!  
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me, or here place  
In this delicious Garden? As my will  
Concurred not to my being, it were but right  
And equal to reduce me to my dust,  
Desirous to resign and render back  
All I received, unable to perform  
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold  
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,  
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added  
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable  
Thy justice seems. Yet, to say truth, too late  
I thus contest; then should have been refused  
Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed.  
Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good,  
Then cavil the conditions? And, though God  
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son  
Prove disobedient, and, reproved, retort,  
'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not!  
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee  
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,  
But natural necessity, begot.  
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own  
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;

Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will.  
Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,  
That dust I am, and shall to dust return.  
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays  
His hand to execute what his decree  
Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?  
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out  
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet  
Mortality, my sentence, and be earth  
Insensible! how glad would lay me down  
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,  
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more  
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse  
To me and to my offspring would torment me  
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt  
Pursues me still—lest all I cannot die;  
Lest that pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man  
Which God inspired, cannot together perish  
With this corporeal clod. Then, in the grave,  
Or in some other dismal place, who knows  
But I shall die a living death? O thought  
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath  
Of life that sinned: what dies but what had life  
And sin? The body properly hath neither.  
All of me, then, shall die: let this appease  
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.  
For, though the Lord of all be infinite,  
Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so,  
But mortal doomed. But can he exercise  
Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?  
Can he make deathless death? That were to make  
Strange contradiction; which to God himself  
Impossible is held, as argument  
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,  
For anger's sake, finite to infinite  
In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour  
Satisfied never? That were to extend  
His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law;  
By which all causes else according still  
To the reception of their matter act,

Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say  
That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,  
Bereaving sense, but endless misery  
From this day onward, which I feel begun  
Both in me and without me, and so last  
To perpetuity——Ay me! that fear  
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution  
On my defenceless head! Both Death and I  
Am found eternal, and incorporate both:  
Nor I on my part single; in me all  
Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony  
That I must leave ye, sons! Oh, were I able  
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!  
So disinherited, how would ye bless  
Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all Mankind,  
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned?  
If guiltless! But from me what can proceed  
But all corrupt—both mind and will depraved  
Not to do only, but to will the same  
With me? How can they, then, acquitted stand  
In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,  
Forced I absolve. All my evasions vain  
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still  
But to my own conviction: first and last  
On me, me only, as the source and spring  
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due.  
So might the wrauth! Fond wish! could'st thou  
support

That burden, heavier than the Earth to bear—  
Than all the world much heavier, though divided  
With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desir'st,  
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope  
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable  
Beyond all past example and future—  
To Satan only like, both crime and doom.  
O Conscience! into what abyss of fears  
And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which  
I find no way, from deeper to deeper plunged!”

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud  
Through the still night—not now, as ere Man fell,

Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air  
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom;  
Which to his evil conscience represented  
All things with double terror. On the ground  
Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft  
Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused  
Of tardy execution, since denounced  
The day of his offence. "Why comes not Death,"  
Said he, "with one thrice-acceptáble stroke  
To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,  
Justice divine not hasten to be just?  
But Death comes not at call; Justice divine  
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.  
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!  
With other echo late I taught your shades  
To answer, and resound far other song."

Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,  
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,  
Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed;  
But her, with stern regard, he thus repelled:—

"Out of my sight, thou Serpent! That name best  
Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false  
And hateful: nothing wants, but that thy shape  
Like his, and colour serpentine, may shew  
Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee  
Henceforth, lest that too heavenly form, pretended  
To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee  
I had persisted happy, had not thy pride  
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,  
Rejected my forewarning, and disdained  
Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,  
Though by the Devil himself; him overweening  
To overreach; but, with the Serpent meeting,  
Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee,  
To trust thee from my side, imagined wise,  
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,  
And understood not all was but a shew,  
Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib  
Crookèd by nature—bent, as now appears,  
More to the part sinister—from me drawn;

Well if thrown out, as supernumerary  
To my just number found! Oh, why did God  
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
With Spirits masculine, create at last  
This novelty on Earth, this fair defect  
Of Nature, and not fill the World at once  
With men as Angels, without feminine;  
Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,  
And more that shall befall—innumerable  
Disturbances on Earth through female snares,  
And strait conjunction with this sex. For either  
He never shall find out fit mate, but such  
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;  
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,  
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained  
By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld  
By parents; or his happiest choice too late  
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound  
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:  
Which infinite calamity shall cause  
To human life, and household peace confound.”

He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,  
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,  
And tresses all disordered, at his feet  
Fell humble, and, imbracing them, besought  
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:—

“Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness Heaven  
What love sincere and reverence in my heart  
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,  
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant  
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not  
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,  
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,  
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,  
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?  
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,  
Between us two let there be peace; both joining,  
As joined in injuries, one enmity  
Against a Foe by doom express assigned us.



That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not  
Thy hatred for this misery befallen—  
On me already lost, me than thyself  
More miserable. Both have sinned; but thou  
Against God only; I against God and thee,  
And to the place of judgment will return,  
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all  
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light  
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,  
Me, me only, just object of His ire.”

She ended, weeping; and her lowly plight,  
Immovable till peace obtained from fault  
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought  
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented  
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,  
Now at his feet submissive in distress—  
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,  
His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.  
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,  
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:—

“Unwary, and too desirous, as before  
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desir'st  
The punishment all on thyself! Alas!  
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain  
His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least  
part,

And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers  
Could alter high decrees, I to that place  
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,  
That on my head all might be visited,  
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,  
To me committed, and by me exposed.  
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame  
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive  
In offices of love how we may lighten  
Each other's burden in our share of woe;  
Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,  
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil,  
A long day's dying, to augment our pain,  
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.”

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:—  
“Adam, by sad experiment I know  
How little weight my words with thee can find,  
Found so erroneous, thence by just event  
Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless,  
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place  
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain  
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,  
Living or dying from thee I will not hide  
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,  
Tending to some relief of our extremes,  
Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,  
As in our evils, and of easier choice.  
If care of our descent perplex us most,  
Which must be born to certain woe, devoured  
By Death at last (and miserable it is  
To be to others cause of misery,  
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring  
Into this cursed world a woeful race,  
That, after wretched life, must be at last  
Food for so foul a Monster), in thy power  
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent  
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.  
Childless thou art; childless remain. So Death  
Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two  
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.  
But, if thou judge it hard and difficult,  
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain  
From love’s due rites, nuptial imbraces sweet,  
And with desire to languish without hope  
Before the present object languishing  
With like desire—which would be misery  
And torment less than none of what we dread—  
Then, both our selves and seed at once to free  
From what we fear for both, let us make short;  
Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply  
With our own hands his office on ourselves.  
Why stand we longer shivering under fears  
That shew no end but death, and have the power,  
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,

Destruction with destruction to destroy?"

She ended here, or vehement despair  
Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts  
Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.  
But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,  
To better hopes his more attentive mind  
Labouring had raised, and thus to Eve replied:—

"Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems  
To argue in thee something more sublime  
And excellent than what thy mind contemns:  
But self-destruction therefore sought refutes  
That excellence thought in thee, and implies  
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret  
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.  
Or, if thou covet death, as utmost end  
Of misery, so thinking to evade  
The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God  
Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire than so  
To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death  
So snatched will not exempt us from the pain  
We are by doom to pay; rather such acts  
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest  
To make death in us live. Then let us seek  
Some safer resolution—which methinks  
I have in view, calling to mind with heed  
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise  
The Serpent's head. Piteous amends! unless  
Be meant whom I conjecture, our grand foe,  
Satan, who in the Serpent hath contrived  
Against us this deceit. To crush his head  
Would be revenge indeed—which will be lost  
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days  
Resolved as thou proposest; so our foe  
Shall scape his punishment ordained, and we  
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.  
No more be mentioned, then, of violence  
Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness  
That cuts us off from hope, and savours only  
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,  
Reluctance against God and his just yoke

Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild  
And gracious temper he both heard and judged,  
Without wrauth or reviling. We expected  
Immediate dissolution, which we thought  
Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee  
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,  
And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,  
Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope  
Glanced on the ground. With labour I must earn  
My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;  
My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold  
Or heat should injure us, his timely care  
Hath, unbesought, provided, and his hands  
Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged.  
How much more, if we pray him, will his ear  
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,  
And teach us further by what means to shun  
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!  
Which now the sky, with various face, begins  
To shew us in this mountain, while the winds  
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks  
Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek  
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish  
Our limbs benumbed—ere this diurnal star  
Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams  
Reflected may with matter sere foment,  
Or by collision of two bodies grind  
The air attrite to fire, as late the clouds,  
Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,  
Tine the slant lightning, whose thwart flame, driven  
down,  
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,  
And sends a comfortable heat from far,  
Which might supply the Sun. Such fire to use,  
And what may else be remedy or cure  
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,  
He will instruct us praying, and of grace  
Beseeching him; so as we need not fear  
To pass commodiously this life, sustained  
By him with many comforts, till we end

In dust, our final rest and native home.  
 What better can we do than, to the place  
 Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall  
 Before him reverent, and there confess  
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears  
 Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air  
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign  
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?  
 Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn  
 From his displeasure, in whose look serene,  
 When angry most he seemed and most severe,  
 What else but favour, grace, and mercy shon?"  
 So spake our Father penitent; nor Eve  
 Felt less remorse. They, forthwith to the place  
 Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell  
 Before him reverent, and both confessed  
 Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears  
 Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air  
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign  
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

## THE ELEVENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.—The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shews to Eve certain ominous signs: he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him: the Angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the Angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood  
 Praying; for from the Mercy-seat above  
 Prevenient grace descending had removed  
 The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh  
 Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed  
 Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer

Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight  
Than loudest oratory. Yet their port  
Not of mean suitors; nor important less  
Seemed their petition than when the ancient Pair  
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,  
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore  
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine  
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers  
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds  
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed  
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then, clad  
With incense, where the Golden Altar fumed,  
By their great Intercessor, came in sight  
Before the Father's Throne. Them the glad Son  
Presenting thus to intercede began:—

“See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are sprung  
From thy implanted grace in Man—these sighs  
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed  
With incense, I, thy priest, before thee bring;  
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed  
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those  
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees  
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen  
From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear  
To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;  
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me  
Interpret for him, me his Advocate  
And propitiation; all his works on me,  
Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those  
Shall perfer, and for these my death shall pay.  
Accept me, and in me from these receive  
The smell of peace toward Mankind; let him live,  
Before thee reconciled, at least his days  
Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I  
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),  
To better life shall yield him, where with me  
All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,  
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.”

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:—  
“All thy request for Man, accepted Son,



Obtain; all thy request was my decree.  
But longer in that Paradise to dwell  
The law I gave to Nature him forbids;  
Those pure immortal elements, that know  
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,  
Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off,  
As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,  
And mortal food, as may dispose him best  
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first  
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt  
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts  
Created him endowed—with Happiness  
And Immortality; that fondly lost,  
This other served but to eternize woe,  
Till I provided Death: so Death becomes  
His final remedy, and, after life  
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined  
By faith and faithful works, to second life,  
Waked in the renovation of the just,  
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.  
But let us call to synod all the Blest  
Through Heaven's wide bounds; from them I will  
not hide  
My judgments—how with Mankind I proceed,  
As how with peccant Angels late they saw,  
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.”  
He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
To the bright Minister that watched. He blew  
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps  
When God descended, and perhaps once more  
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast  
Filled all the regions: from their blissful bowers  
Of amarantin shade, fountain or spring,  
By the waters of life, where'er they sate  
In fellowships of joy, the Sons of Light  
Hasted, resorting to the summons high,  
And took their seats, till from his Throne supreme  
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:—  
“O Sons, like one of us Man is become  
To know both Good and Evil, since his taste

Of that defended Fruit; but let him boast  
His knowledge of good lost and evil got,  
Happier had it sufficed him to have known  
Good by itself and evil not at all.  
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite—  
My motions in him; longer than they move,  
His heart I know how variable and vain,  
Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand  
Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,  
And live for ever, dream at least to live  
For ever, to remove him I decree,  
And send him from the Garden forth, to till  
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.  
Michael, this my behest have thou in charge:  
Take to thee from among the Cherubim  
Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend,  
Or in behalf of Man, or to invade  
Vacant possessions, some new trouble raise;  
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God  
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair,  
From hallowed ground the unholy, and denounce  
To them, and to their progeny, from thence  
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint  
At the sad sentence rigorously urged  
(For I behold them softened, and with tears  
Bewailing their excess), all terror hide.  
If patiently thy bidding they obey,  
Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal  
To Adam what shall come in future days,  
As I shall thee enlighten; intermix  
My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed.  
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace;  
And on the east side of the Garden place,  
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,  
Cherubic watch, and of a Sword the flame  
Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,  
And guard all passage to the Tree of Life;  
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove  
To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,  
With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude."

He ceased, and the Archangelic Power prepared  
For swift descent; with him the cohort bright  
Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each  
Had, like a double Janus; all their shape  
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those  
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,  
Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed  
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,  
To resalute the World with sacred light,  
Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews imbalmed  
The Earth, when Adam and first matron Eve  
Had ended now their orisons, and found  
Strength added from above, new hope to spring  
Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked;  
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed:—

“Eve, easily may faith admit that all  
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;  
But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven  
So prevalent as to concern the mind  
Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,  
Hard to belief may seem. Yet this will prayer,  
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne  
Even to the seat of God. For, since I sought  
By prayer the offended Deity to appease,  
Kneeled and before him humbled all my heart,  
Methought I saw him placable and mild,  
Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew  
That I was heard with favour; peace returned  
Home to my breast, and to my memory  
His promise that thy seed shall bruise our Foe;  
Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now  
Assures me that the bitterness of death  
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee!  
Eve rightly called, Mother of all Mankind,  
Mother of all things living, since by thee  
Man is to live, and all things live for Man.”

To whom thus Eve with sad demeanour meek:—  
“Ill-worthy I such title should belong  
To me transgressor, who, for thee ordained  
A help, became thy snare; to me reproach

Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise.  
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,  
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced  
The source of life; next favourable thou,  
Who highly thus to entitle me voutsaf'st,  
Far other name deserving. But the field  
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,  
Though after sleepless night; for see! the Morn,  
All unconcerned with our unrest, begins  
Her rosy progress smiling. Let us forth,  
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,  
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined  
Laborious, till day droop. While here we dwell,  
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?  
Here let us live, though in fallen state, content."

So spake, so wished, much-humbled Eve; but Fate  
Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed  
On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,  
After short blush of morn. Nigh in her sight  
The bird of Jove, stooped from his aerie tour,  
Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;  
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,  
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,  
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;  
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.  
Adam observed, and, with his eye the chase  
Pursuing, not unmoved to Eve thus spake:—

"O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,  
Which Heaven by these mute signs in Nature shews,  
Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn  
Us, haply too secure of our discharge  
From penalty because from death released  
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,  
Who knows, or more than this, that we are dust,  
And thither must return, and be no more?  
Why else this double object in our sight,  
Of flight pursued in the air and o'er the ground  
One way the self-same hour? Why in the east  
Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light  
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws

O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,  
And slow descends, with something Heavenly fraught?"

He erred not; for, by this, the Heavenly bands  
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now  
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt—  
A glorious Apparition, had not doubt  
And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.  
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met  
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw  
The field pavilioned with his guardians bright;  
Nor that which on the flaming Mount appeared  
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,  
Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise  
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,  
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch  
In their bright stand there left his Powers to seize  
Possession of the Garden; he alone,  
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,  
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,  
While the great Visitant approached, thus spake:—

"Eve, now expect great tidings, which, perhaps,  
Of us will soon determine, or impose  
New laws to be observed; for I descry,  
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,  
One of the Heavenly host, and, by his gait,  
None of the meanest—some great Potentate  
Or of the Thrones above, such majesty  
Invests him coming; yet not terrible,  
That I should fear, nor sociably mild,  
As Raphael, that I should much confide,  
But solemn and sublime; whom, not to offend,  
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire."

He ended; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,  
Not in his shape celestial, but as man  
Clad to meet man. Over his lucid arms  
A military vest of purple flowed,  
Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain  
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old  
In time of truce; Iris had dipt the woof.  
His starry helm unbuckled shewed him prime

In manhood where youth ended; by his side,  
As in a glistering zodiac, hung the sword,  
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.  
Adam bowed low; he, kingly, from his state  
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:—

“Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs.  
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,  
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,  
Defeated of his seizure many days,  
Given thee of grace, wherein thou may'st repent,  
And one bad act with many deeds well done  
May'st cover. Well may then thy Lord, appeased,  
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;  
But longer in this Paradise to dwell  
Permits not. To remove thee I am come,  
And send thee from the Garden forth, to till  
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.”  
He added not; for Adam, at the news  
Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,  
That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen  
Yet all had heard, with audible lament  
Discovered soon the place of her retire:—

“O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!  
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave  
Thee, native soil? these happy walks and shades,  
Fit haunt of Gods, where I had hope to spend,  
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day  
That must be mortal to us both? O flowers,  
That never will in other climate grow,  
My early visitation, and my last  
At even, which I bred up with tender hand  
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,  
Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank  
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?  
Thee, lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorned  
With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee  
How shall I part, and whither wander down  
Into a lower world, to this obscure  
And wild? How shall we breathe in other air  
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?”



Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:  
"Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign  
What justly thou hast lost; nor set thy heart,  
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine.  
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes  
Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;  
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp  
Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,  
To Michael thus his humble words addressed:—

"Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named  
Of them the highest—for such of shape may seem  
Prince above princes—gently hast thou told  
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,  
And in performing end us. What besides  
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,  
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring—  
Departure from this happy place, our sweet  
Recess, and only consolation left  
Familiar to our eyes; all places else  
Inhospitable appear, and desolate,  
Nor knowing us, nor known. And, if by prayer  
Incessant I could hope to change the will  
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease  
To weary him with my assiduous cries;  
But prayer against his absolute decree  
No more avails than breath against the wind,  
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:  
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.  
This most afflicts me—that, departing hence,  
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived  
His blessèd countenance. Here I could frequent,  
With worship, place by place where he voutsafed  
Presence Divine, and to my sons relate,  
'On this mount He appeared; under this tree  
Stood visible; among these pines his voice  
I heard; here with him at this fountain talked.'  
So many grateful altars I would rear  
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone  
Of lustre from the brook, in memory

Or monument to ages, and thereon  
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.  
In yonder nether world where shall I seek  
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?  
For, though I fled him angry, yet, recalled  
To life prolonged and promised race, I now  
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts  
Of glory, and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:—  
"Adam, thou know'st Heaven his, and all the Earth,  
Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills  
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,  
Fomented by his virtual power and warmed.  
All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,  
No despicable gift; surmise not, then,  
His presence to these narrow bounds confined  
Of Paradise or Eden. This had been  
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread  
All generations, and had hither come,  
From all the ends of the Earth, to celebrate  
And reverence thee their great progenitor.  
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down  
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:  
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain  
God is, as here, and will be found alike  
Present, and of his presence many a sign  
Still following thee, still compassing thee round  
With goodness and paternal love, his face  
Express, and of his steps the track divine.  
Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirmed  
Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent  
To shew thee what shall come in future days  
To thee and to thy offspring. Good with bad  
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending  
With sinfulness of men—thereby to learn  
True patience, and to temper joy with fear  
And pious sorrow, equally inured  
By moderation either state to bear,  
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead  
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure

Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend  
This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)  
Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,  
As once thou slept'st while she to life was formed."

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:—  
"Ascend; I follow thee, safe Guide, the path  
Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heaven submit,  
However chastening—to the evil turn  
My obvious breast, arming to overcome  
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,  
If so I may attain." So both ascend  
In the Visions of God. It was a hill,  
Of Paradise the highest, from whose top  
The hemisphere of Earth is clearest ken  
Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.  
Not higher that hill, nor wider looking ground,  
Whereon for different cause the Tempter set  
Our second Adam, in the wilderness,  
To shew him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory.  
His eye might there command wherever stood  
City of old or modern fame, the seat  
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls  
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,  
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,  
To Paquin, of Sinæan kings, and thence  
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,  
Down to the golden Chersonese, or where  
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since  
In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar  
In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,  
Turchestan-born; nor could his eye not ken  
The empire of Negus to his utmost port  
Ercoco, and the less maritime kings,  
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,  
And Sofala (thought Ophir), to the realm  
Of Congo, and Angola fardest south,  
Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount,  
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,  
Marocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;  
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway

The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw  
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,  
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat  
Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled  
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons  
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights  
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed  
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight  
Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue  
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,  
And from the well of life three drops instilled.  
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,  
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,  
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,  
Sunk down, and all his spirits became intranced.  
But him the gentle Angel by the hand  
Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:—

“Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold  
The effects which thy original crime hath wrought  
In some to spring from thee, who never touched  
The excepted Tree, nor with the Snake conspired,  
Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive  
Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.”

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,  
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves  
New-reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds;  
I' the midst an altar as the landmark stood,  
Rustic, of grassy sord. Thither anon  
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought  
First-fruits, the green ear and the yellow sheaf,  
Unculled, as came to hand. A shepherd next,  
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,  
Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid  
The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,  
On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed.  
His offering soon propitious fire from heaven  
Consumed, with nimble glance and grateful steam;  
The other's not, for his was not sincere:  
Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,  
Smote him into the midriff with a stone

That beat out life; he fell, and, deadly pale,  
Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused.  
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart  
Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried:—

“O Teacher, some great mischief hath befallen  
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed:  
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?”

To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:—  
“These two are brethren, Adam, and to come  
Out of thy loins. The unjust the just hath slain,  
For envy that his brother’s offering found  
From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact  
Will be avenged, and the other’s faith approved  
Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,  
Rowling in dust and gore.” To which our Sire:—

“Alas, both for the deed and for the cause!  
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way  
I must return to native dust? O sight  
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold!  
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!”

To whom thus Michael:—“Death thou hast seen  
In his first shape on Man; but many shapes  
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead  
To his grim cave—all dismal, yet to sense  
More terrible at the entrance than within.  
Some, as thou saw’st, by violent stroke shall die,  
By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more  
In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring  
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew  
Before thee shall appear, that thou may’st know  
What misery the inabstinence of Eve  
Shall bring on men.” Immediately a place  
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;  
A lazarus-house it seemed, wherein were laid  
Numbers of all diseased—all maladies  
Of ghastly spasm, of racking torture, qualms  
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,  
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,  
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,  
Dæmoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,

And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,  
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,  
Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.  
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair  
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;  
And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked  
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.  
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long  
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,  
Though not of woman born: compassion quelled  
His best of man, and gave him up to tears  
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess,  
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:—

“O miserable Mankind, to what fall  
Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!  
Better end here unborn. Why is life given  
To be thus wrested from us? rather why  
Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew  
What we receive, would either not accept  
Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,  
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus  
The image of God in Man, created once  
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,  
To such unsightly sufferings be debased  
Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,  
Retaining still divine similitude  
In part, from such deformities be free,  
And for his Maker’s image’ sake exempt?”

“Their Maker’s image,” answered Michael, “then  
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified  
To serve ungoverned Appetite, and took  
His image whom they served—a brutish vice,  
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.  
Therefore so abject is their punishment,  
Disfiguring not God’s likeness, but their own;  
Or, if his likeness, by themselves defaced  
While they pervert pure Nature’s healthful rules  
To loathsome sickness—worthily, since they  
God’s image did not reverence in themselves.”



"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit.

But is there yet no other way, besides

These painful passages, how we may come

To death, and mix with our connatural dust?"

"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe  
The rule of *Not too much*, by temperance taught  
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence  
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,  
Till many years over thy head return.

So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop  
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease  
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.

This is old age; but then thou must outlive

Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change

To withered, weak, and grey; thy senses then,

Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo

To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,

Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign

A melancholy damp of cold and dry,

To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume

The balm of life." To whom our Ancestor:— "

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong  
Life much—bent rather how I may be quit,  
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge,

Which I must keep till my appointed day

Of rendering up, and patiently attend

My dissolution." Michaël replied:—

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st  
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven.

And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon  
Were tents of various hue: by some were herds  
Of cattle grazing: others whence the sound  
Of instruments that made melodious chime  
Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved  
Their stops and chords was seen: his volant touch  
Instinct through all proportions low and high  
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.  
In other part stood one who, at the forge  
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass

Had melted (whether found where casual fire  
Had wasted woods, on mountain or in vale,  
Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot  
To some cave's mouth, or whether washed by stream  
From underground) ; the liquid ore he drained  
Into fit moulds prepared ; from which he formed  
First his own tools, then what might else be wrought  
Fusil or graven in metal. After these,  
But on the hither side, a different sort  
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,  
Down to the plain descended : by their guise  
Just men they seemed, and all their study bent  
To worship God aright, and know his works  
Not hid ; nor those things last which might preserve  
Freedom and peace to men. They on the plain  
Long had not walked when from the tents behold  
A bevy of fair women, richly gay  
In gems and wanton dress ! to the harp they sung  
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.  
The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes  
Rove without rein, till, in the amorous net  
Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose.  
And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,  
Love's harbinger, appeared ; then, all in heat,  
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke  
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked :  
With feast and music all the tents resound.  
Such happy interview, and fair event  
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,  
And charming symphonies, attached the heart  
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,  
The bent of Nature ; which he thus expressed :—

“ True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,  
Much better seems this vision, and more hope  
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past :  
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse ;  
Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends.”

To whom thus Michael :—“ Judge not what is best  
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,  
Created, as thou art, to nobler end,

Holy and pure, conformity divine.

Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant were the tents  
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race  
Who slew his brother: studious they appear  
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare;  
Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit  
Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.  
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;  
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed  
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,  
Yet empty of all good wherein consists  
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;  
Bred only and completed to the taste  
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,  
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye;—  
To these that sober race of men, whose lives  
Religious titled them the Sons of God,  
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,  
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles  
Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy  
(Erelong to swim at large) and laugh; for which  
The world erelong a world of tears must weep.”

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:—  
“O pity and shame, that they who to live well  
Entered so fair should turn aside to tread  
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!  
But still I see the tenor of Man's woe  
Holds on the same, from Woman to begin.”

“From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,”  
Said the Angel, “who should better hold his place  
By wisdom, and superior gifts received.  
But now prepare thee for another scene.”

He looked, and saw wide territory spread  
Before him—towns, and rural works between,  
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,  
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,  
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.  
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,  
Single or in array of battle ranged  
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood.

One way a band select from forage drives  
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,  
From a fat meadow-ground, or fleecy flock,  
Ewes and their bleating lambs, over the plain,  
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,  
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray:  
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;  
Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies  
With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field  
Deserted. Others to a city strong  
Lay siege, encamped, by battery, scale, and mine,  
Assaulting; others from the wall defend  
With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire;  
On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.  
In other parts the sceptred haralds call  
To council in the city-gates: anon  
Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,  
Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon  
In factious opposition, till at last  
Of middle age one rising, eminent  
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,  
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,  
And judgment from above: him old and young  
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,  
Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence,  
Unseen amid the throng. So violence  
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,  
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.  
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide  
Lamenting turned full sad:—"Oh, what are these?  
Death's ministers, not men! who thus deal death  
Inhumanly to men, and multiply  
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew  
His brother; for of whom such massacre  
Make they but of their brethren, men of men?  
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven  
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?"

To whom thus Michael:—"These are the product'  
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st,  
Where good with bad were matched; who of themselves

Abhor to join, and, by imprudence mixed,  
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.  
Such were these Giants, men of high renown;  
For in those days might only shall be admired,  
And valour and heroic virtue called.  
To overcome in battle, and subdue  
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
Of human glory, and, for glory done,  
Of triumph to be styled great conquerors,  
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods—  
Destroyers rightlier called, and Plagues of men.  
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,  
And what most merits fame in silence hid.  
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st  
The only righteous in a world perverse,  
And therefore hated, therefore so beset  
With foes, for daring single to be just,  
And utter odious truth, that God would come  
To judge them with his Saints—him the Most High,  
Rapt in a balmy cloud, with wingèd steeds,  
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God  
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,  
Exempt from death, to show thee what reward  
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;  
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.  
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;  
All now was turned to jollity and game,  
To luxury and riot, feast and dance,  
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,  
Rape or adultery, where passing fair  
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.  
At length a reverend Sire among them came,  
And of their doings great dislike declared,  
And testified against their ways. He oft  
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,  
Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached  
Conversion and repentance, as to souls  
In prison, under judgments imminent;

But all in vain. Which when he saw, he ceased  
Contending, and removed his tents far off;  
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,  
Began to build a Vessel of huge bulk,  
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth,  
Smeared round with pitch, and in the side a door  
Contrived, and of provisions laid in large  
For man and beast: when lo! a wonder strange!  
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small  
Came sevens and pairs, and entered in, as taught  
Their order; last, the Sire and his three sons,  
With their four wives; and God made fast the door.  
Meanwhile the South-wind rose, and, with black wings  
Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove  
From under heaven; the hills to their supply  
Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,  
Sent up amain; and now the thickened sky  
Like a dark ceiling stood: down rushed the rain  
Impetuous, and continued till the earth  
No more was seen. The floating Vessel swum  
Uplifted, and secure with beakèd prow  
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else  
Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp  
Deep under water rowled; sea covered sea,  
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,  
Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped  
And stabled: of mankind, so numerous late,  
All left in one small bottom swum imbarked.  
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold  
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,  
Depopulation! Thee another flood,  
Of tears and sorrow a flood thee also drowned,  
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared  
By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,  
Though comfortless, as when a father mourns  
His children, all in view destroyed at once,  
And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint:—

“O Visions ill foreseen! Better had I  
Lived ignorant of future—so had borne  
My part of evil only, each day's lot



Enough to bear. Those now that were dispensed  
The burden of many ages on me light  
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth  
Abortive, to torment me, ere their being,  
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek  
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall  
Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,  
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,  
And he the future evil shall no less  
In apprehension than in substance feel  
Grievous to bear. But that care now is past;  
Man is not whom to warn; those few escaped  
Famine and anguish will at last consume,  
Wandering that watery desert. I had hope,  
When violence was ceased and war on Earth,  
All would have then gone well, peace would have  
crowned

With length of happy days the race of Man;  
But I was far deceived, for now I see  
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.  
How comes it thus? Unfold, Celestial Guide,  
And whether here the race of Man will end.”

To whom thus Michael:—“Those whom last thou  
saw’st

In triumph and luxurious wealth are they  
First seen in acts of powers eminent  
And great exploits, but of true virtue void;  
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,  
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby  
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,  
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,  
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride  
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.  
The conquered, also, and enslaved by war,  
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,  
And fear of God—from whom their piety feigned  
In sharp contest of battle found no aid  
Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,  
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,  
Worldly, or dissolute, on what their lords

Shall leave them to enjoy; for the Earth shall bear  
More than enough, that temperance may be tried.  
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved,  
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;  
One man except, the only son of light  
In a dark age, against example good,  
Against allurements, custom, and a world  
Offended. Fearless of reproach and scorn,  
Or violence, he of their wicked ways  
Shall them admonish, and before them set  
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe  
And full of peace, denouncing wrath to come  
On their impenitence, and shall return  
Of them derided, but of God observed  
The one just man alive: by his command  
Shall build a wondrous Ark, as thou beheld'st,  
To save himself and household from amidst  
A world devote to universal wrack.  
No sooner he, with them of man and beast  
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged  
And sheltered round, but all the cataracts  
Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour  
Rain day and night; all fountains of the deep,  
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp  
Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise  
Above the highest hills. Then shall this Mount  
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved  
Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd flood,  
With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,  
Down the great River to the opening Gulf,  
And there take root, an island salt and bare,  
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang—  
To teach thee that God at'tributes to place  
No sanctity, if none be thither brought  
By men who there frequent or therein dwell.  
And now what further shall ensue behold."

He looked, and saw the Ark hull on the flood,  
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,  
Driven by a keen North-wind, that, blowing dry,  
Wrinkled the face of Deluge, as decayed;

And the clear sun on his wide watery glass  
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,  
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink  
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole  
With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopt  
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.  
The Ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,  
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.  
And now the tops of hills as rocks appear;  
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive  
Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.  
Forthwith from out the ark a Raven flies,  
And, after him, the surer messenger,  
A Dove, sent forth once and again to spy  
Green tree or ground whereon his foot may light;  
The second time returning, in his bill  
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign.  
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark  
The ancient sire descends, with all his train;  
Then, with uplifted hands and eyes devout,  
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds  
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a Bow  
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,  
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.  
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,  
Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:—

“O thou, who future things canst represent  
As present, Heavenly Instructor, I revive  
At this last sight, assured that Man shall live,  
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.  
Far less I now lament for one whole world  
Of wicked sons destroyed than I rejoice  
For one man found so perfit and so just  
That God voutsafes to raise another world  
From him, and all his anger to forget.  
But say what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven:  
Distended as the brow of God appeased?  
Or serve they as a flowery verge to bind  
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,  
Lest it again dissolve and shower the Earth?”

To whom the Archangel:—"Dextrously thou aim'st.  
So willingly doth God remit his ire:  
Though late repenting him of Man depraved,  
Grieved at his heart, when, looking down, he saw  
The whole Earth filled with violence, and all flesh  
Corrupting each their way; yet, those removed,  
Such grace shall one just man find in his sight  
That he relents, not to blot out mankind,  
And makes a covenant never to destroy  
The Earth again by flood, nor let the sea  
Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world  
With man therein or beast; but, when he brings  
Over the Earth a cloud, will therein set  
His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look  
And call to mind his Covenant. Day and night,  
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,  
Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new  
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

## THE TWELFTH BOOK

**THE ARGUMENT.**—The Angel Michael continues, from the **Flood**, to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that Seed of the Woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery Sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who, in his journey, bates at noon,  
Though bent on speed, so here the Archangel paused  
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,  
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;  
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:—  
"Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end,  
And Man as from a second stock proceed.

Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive  
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine  
Must needs impair and weary human sense.  
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;  
Thou, therefore, give due audience, and attend.

“This second source of men, while yet but few,  
And while the dread of judgment past remains  
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,  
With some regard to what is just and right  
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,  
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,  
Corn, wine and oil; and, from the herd or flock  
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,  
With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast,  
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed, and dwell  
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,  
Under paternal rule, till one shall rise,  
Of proud, ambitious heart, who, not content  
With fair equality, fraternal state,  
Will arrogate dominion undeserved  
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess  
Concord and law of Nature from the Earth—  
Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game)  
With war and hostile snare such as refuse  
Subjection to his empire tyrannous.  
‘A mighty Hunter thence he shall be styled  
Before the Lord, as in despite of Heaven,  
Or from Heaven claiming second sovranity,  
And from rebellion shall derive his name,  
Though of rebellion others he accuse.  
He, with a crew, whom like ambition joins  
With him or under him to tyrannize,  
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find  
The Plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge  
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.  
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build  
A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven;  
And get themselves a name, lest far dispersed  
In foreign lands, their memory be lost—  
Regardless whether good or evil fame.

But God, who oft descends to visit men  
Unseen, and through their habitations walks,  
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,  
Comes down to see their city, ere the Tower  
Obstruct Heaven-towers, and in derision sets  
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase  
Quite out their native language, and, instead,  
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown.  
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud  
Among the builders; each to other calls,  
Not understood—till, hoarse and all in rage,  
As mocked they storm. Great laughter was in Heaven,  
And looking down to see the hubbub strange  
And hear the din. Thus was the building left  
Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* named.”

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:—  
“O execrable son, so to aspire  
Above his brethren, to himself assuming  
Authority usurped, from God not given!  
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,  
Dominion absolute; that right we hold  
By his donation: but man over men  
He made not lord—such title to himself  
Reserving, human left from human free.  
But this Usurper his encroachment proud  
Stays not on Man; to God his Tower intends  
Siege and defiance. Wretched man! what food  
Will he convey up thither, to sustain  
Himself and his rash army, where thin air  
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,  
And famish him of breath, if not of bread?”

To whom thus Michael:—“Justly thou abhorr’st  
That son, who on the quiet state of men  
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue  
Rational liberty; yet know withal,  
Since thy original lapse, true liberty  
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells  
Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.  
Reason in Man obscured, or not obeyed,  
Immediately inordinate desires



And upstart passions catch the government  
From Reason, and to servitude reduce  
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits  
Within himself unworthy powers to reign  
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,  
Subjects him from without to violent lords,  
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall  
His outward freedom. Tyranny must be,  
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.  
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low  
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,  
But justice and some fatal curse annexed,  
Deprives them of their outward liberty,  
Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son  
Of him who built the Ark, who, for the shame  
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,  
*Servant of servants*, on his vicious race.  
Thus will this latter, as the former world,  
Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,  
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw  
His presence from among them, and avert  
His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth  
To leave them to their own polluted ways,  
And one peculiar nation to select  
From all the rest, of whom to be invoked—  
A nation from one faithful man to spring.  
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,  
Bred up in idol-worship—Oh, that men  
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,  
While yet the patriarch lived who scaped the Flood,  
As to forsake the living God, and fall  
To worship their own work in wood and stone  
For gods!—yet him God the Most High voutsafes  
To call by vision from his father's house,  
His kindred, and false gods into a land  
Which he will shew him, and from him will raise  
A mighty nation, and upon him shower  
His benediction so that in his seed  
All Nations shall be blest. He straight obeys;  
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.

I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith  
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,  
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford  
To Haran—after him a cumbrous train  
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude—  
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth  
With God, who called him, in a land unknown  
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents  
Pitched about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain  
Of Moreh. There, by promise, he receives  
Gift to his progeny of all that land,  
From Hamath northward to the Desert south  
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed),  
From Hermon east to the great western sea;  
Mount Hermon, yonder sea, each place behold  
In prospect, as I point them: on the shore,  
Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,  
Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons  
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.  
This ponder, that all nations of the Earth  
Shall in his seed be blessed. By that seed  
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise  
The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon  
Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,  
Whom *faithful Abraham* due time shall call,  
A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves,  
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.  
The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs  
From Canaan to a land hereafter called  
Egypt, divided by the river Nile;  
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths  
Into the sea. To sojourn in that land  
He comes, invited by a younger son  
In time of dearth—a son whose worthy deeds  
Raise him to be the second in that realm  
Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race  
Growing into a nation, and now grown  
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks  
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests  
Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves,

Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:  
Till, by two brethren (those two brethren call  
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim  
His people from enthralment, they return,  
With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.  
But first the lawless tyrant, who denies  
To know their God, or message to regard,  
Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire:  
To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;  
Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill  
With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;  
His cattle must of rot and murrain die;  
Botches and blains must all his flesh imboss,  
And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,  
Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,  
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;  
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,  
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down  
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;  
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,  
Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;  
Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born  
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds  
The River-dragon tamed at length submits  
To let his sojourners depart, and oft  
Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice  
More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage  
Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea  
Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass,  
As on dry land, between two crystal walls,  
Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand  
Divided till his rescued gain their shore:  
Such wondrous power God to his Saint will lend,  
Though present in his Angel, who shall go  
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire—  
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire—  
To guide them in their journey, and remove  
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues.  
All night he will pursue, but his approach  
Darkness defends between till morning-watch;

Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud  
God looking forth will trouble all his host,  
And craze their chariot-wheels: when, by command,  
Moses once more his potent rod extends  
Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;  
On their imbattled ranks the waves return,  
And overwhelm their war. The race elect  
Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance  
Through the wild Desert—not the readiest way,  
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,  
War terrify them inexpert, and fear  
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather  
Inglorious life with servitude; for life  
To noble and ignoble is more sweet  
Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.  
This also shall they gain by their delay  
In the wide wilderness: there they shall found  
Their government, and their great Senate choose  
Through the twelve Tribes, to rule by laws ordained.  
God, from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top  
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself,  
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,  
Ordain them laws—part, such as appertain  
To civil justice; part, religious rites  
Of sacrifice, informing them, by types  
And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise  
The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve  
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God  
To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech  
That Moses might report to them his will,  
And terror cease; he grants what they besought,  
Instructed that to God is no access  
Without Mediator, whose high office now  
Moses in figure bears, to introduce  
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,  
And all the Prophets, in their age, the times  
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus laws and rites  
Established, such delight hath God in men  
Obedient to his will that he voutsafes  
Among them to set up his Tabernacle—

The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.  
By his prescript a sanctuary is framed  
Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein  
An ark, and in the Ark his testimony,  
The records of his covenant; over these  
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings  
Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn  
Seven lamps, as in a zodiac representing  
The heavenly fires. Over the tent a cloud  
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,  
Save when they journey; and at length they come,  
Conducted by his Angel, to the land  
Promised to Abraham and his seed. The rest  
Were long to tell—how many battles fought;  
How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won;  
Or how the sun shall in mid-heaven stand still  
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,  
Man's voice commanding, 'Sun, in Gibeon stand,  
And thou, Moon, in the vale of Aialon,  
Till *Israel* overcome!'—so call the third  
From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him  
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interposed:—"O sent from Heaven,  
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things  
Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concern  
Just Abraham and his seed. Now first I find  
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,  
Erewhile perplexed with thoughts what would become  
Of me and all mankind; but now I see  
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest—  
Favour unmerited by me, who sought  
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.  
This yet I apprehend not—why to those  
Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth  
So many and so various laws are given.  
So many laws argue so many sins  
Among them; how can God with such reside?"

To whom thus Michael:—"Doubt not but that sin  
Will reign among them, as of thee begot;  
And therefore was law given them, to evince

Their natural pravity, by stirring up  
Sin against Law to fight, that, when they see  
Law can discover sin, but not remove,  
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,  
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude  
Some blood more precious must be paid for Man,  
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness,  
To them by faith imputed, they may find  
Justification towards God, and peace  
Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies  
Cannot appease, nor man the moral part  
Perform, and not performing cannot live.  
So Law appears imperfect, and but given  
With purpose to resign them, in full time,  
Up to a better covenant, disciplined  
From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,  
From imposition of strict laws to free  
Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear  
To filial, works of law to works of faith.  
And therefore shall not Moses, though of God  
Highly beloved, being but the minister  
Of Law, his people into Canaan lead;  
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call,  
His name and office bearing who shall quell  
The adversary Serpent, and bring back  
Through the world's wilderness long-wandered Man  
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.  
Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,  
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins  
National interrupt their public peace,  
Provoking God to raise them enemies—  
From whom as oft he saves them penitent,  
By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom  
The second, both for piety renowned  
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive  
Irrevocable, that his regal throne  
For ever shall endure. The like shall sing  
All Prophecy—that of the royal stock  
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise  
A son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,



Foretold to Abraham as in whom shall trust  
All nations, and to kings foretold of kings  
The last, for of his reign shall be no end.  
But first a long succession must ensue;  
And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,  
The clouded Ark of God; till then in tents  
Wandering, shall in a glorious Temple enshrine.  
Such follow him as shall be registered  
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll:  
Whose foul idolatries and other faults,  
Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense  
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,  
Their city, his Temple, and his holy Ark,  
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey  
To that proud city whose high walls thou saw'st  
Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.  
There in captivity he lets them dwell  
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,  
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn  
To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.  
Returned from Babylon by leave of kings,  
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God  
They first re-edify, and for a while  
In mean estate live moderate, till, grown  
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.  
But first among the priests dissension springs—  
Men who attend the altar, and should most  
Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings  
Upon the Temple itself; at last they seize  
The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;  
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true  
Anointed King Messiah might be born  
Barred of his right. Yet at his birth a Star,  
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come,  
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire  
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:  
His place of birth a solemn Angel tells  
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;  
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire  
Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.

A Virgin is his mother, but his sire  
The Power of the Most High. He shall ascend  
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign  
With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens."

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy  
Surcharged as had, like grief, been dewed in tears,  
Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:—

"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher  
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand  
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in  
vain—

Why our great Expectation should be called  
The Seed of Woman. Virgin Mother, hail!  
High in the love of Heaven, yet from my loins  
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son  
Of God Most High; so God with Man unites.  
Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise  
Except with mortal pain. Say where and when  
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's  
heel."

To whom thus Michael:—"Dream not of their  
fight

As of a duel, or the local wounds  
Of head or heel. Not therefore joins the Son  
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil  
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome  
Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,  
Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound;  
Which he who comes thy Saviour shall recure,  
Not by destroying Satan, but his works  
In thee and in thy seed. Nor can this be,  
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,  
Obedience to the law of God, imposed  
On penalty of death, and suffering death,  
The penalty to thy transgression due,  
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:  
So only can high justice rest appaid.  
The Law of God exact he shall fulfil  
Both by obedience and by love, though love  
Alone fulfil the Law; thy punishment

He shall endure, by coming in the flesh  
To a reproachful life and cursed death,  
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe  
In his redemption, and that his obedience  
Imputed becomes theirs by faith—his merits  
To save them, not their own, though legal, works.  
For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,  
Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned  
A shameful and accursed, nailed to the Cross  
By his own nation, slain for bringing life;  
But to the cross he nails thy enemies—  
The Law that is against thee, and the sins  
Of all mankind, with him there crucified,  
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust  
In this his satisfaction. So he dies,  
But soon revives; Death over him no power  
Shall long usurp. Ere the third dawning light  
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise  
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,  
Thy ransom paid, which Man from Death redeems—  
His death for Man, as many as offered life  
Neglect not, and the benefit imbrace  
By faith not void of works. This godlike act  
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,  
In sin for ever lost from life; this act  
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,  
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,  
And fix far deeper in his head their stings  
Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,  
Or theirs whom he redeems—a death like sleep,  
A gentle wafting to immortal life.  
Nor after resurrection shall he stay  
Longer on Earth than certain times to appear  
To his disciples—men who in his life  
Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge  
To teach all nations what of him they learned  
And his salvation, them who shall believe  
Baptizing in the profluent stream—the sign  
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life  
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,

For death like that which the Redeemer died.  
All nations they shall teach; for from that day  
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins  
Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons  
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;  
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.  
Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend  
With victory, triumphing through the air  
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise  
The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in chains  
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;  
Then enter into glory and resume  
His seat at God's right hand, exalted high  
Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come,  
When this World's dissolution shall be ripe,  
With glory and power, to judge both quick and  
dead—

To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward  
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,  
Whether in Heaven or Earth; for then the Earth  
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place  
Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

So spake the Archangel Michaël; then paused,  
As at the World's great period; and our Sire,  
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:—

"O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense,  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good—more wonderful  
Than that which by creation first brought forth  
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,  
Whether I should repent me now of sin  
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice  
Much more that much more good thereof shall  
spring—

To God more glory, more good-will to men  
From God—and over wrauth grace shall abound.  
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven  
Must reascend, what will betide the few,  
His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,  
The enemies of truth. Who then shall guide

His people, who defend? Will they not deal  
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?"  
"Be sure they will," said the Angel; "but from  
Heaven

He to his own a Comforter will send,  
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell,  
His Spirit, within them, and the law of faith  
Working through love upon their hearts shall write,  
To guide them in all truth, and also arm  
With spiritual armour, able to resist  
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts—  
What man can do against them not afraid,  
Though to the death; against such cruelties  
With inward consolations recompensed,  
And often supported so as shall amaze  
Their proudest persecutors. For the Spirit,  
Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends  
To evangelize the nations, then on all  
Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue  
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,  
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win  
Great numbers of each nation to receive  
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at length  
Their ministry performed, and race well run,  
Their doctrine and their story written left,  
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,  
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,  
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven  
To their own vile advantages shall turn  
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth  
With superstitions and traditions taint,  
Left only in those written Records pure,  
Though not but by the Spirit understood.  
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,  
Palaces, and titles, and with these to join  
Secular power, though feigning still to act  
By spiritual; to themselves appropriating  
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given  
To all believers; and, from that pretense,  
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force

On every conscience—laws which none shall find  
Left them enrowled, or what the Spirit within  
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then  
But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind  
His consort, Liberty? what but unbuild  
His living temples, built by faith to stand—  
Their own faith, not another's? for, on Earth,  
Who against faith and conscience can be heard  
Infallible? Yet many will presume:  
Whence heavy persecution shall arise  
On all who in the worship persevere  
Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,  
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms  
Religion satisfied; Truth shall retire  
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith  
Rarely be found. So shall the World go on,  
To good malignant, to bad men benign,  
Under her own weight groaning, till the day  
Appear of respiration to the just  
And vengeance to the wicked, at return  
Of Him so lately promised to thy aid,  
The Woman's Seed—obscurely then foretold,  
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;  
Last in the clouds from Heaven to be revealed  
In glory of the Father, to dissolve  
Satan with his perverted World; then raise  
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,  
New Heavens, new Earth, Ages of endless date  
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,  
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss."

He ended; and thus Adam last replied:—  
"How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,  
Measured this transient World, the race of Time,  
Till Time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss—  
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.  
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,  
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill  
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;  
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.  
Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,



'And love with fear the only God, to walk  
As in his presence, ever to observe  
His providence, and on him sole depend,  
Merciful over all his works, with good  
Still overcoming evil, and by small  
Accomplishing great things—by things deemed weak  
Subverting worldly-strong, and worldly-wise  
By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake  
Is fortitude to highest victory,  
And to the faithful death the gate of life—  
Taught this by his example whom I now  
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

To whom thus also the Angel last replied:—  
"This having learned, thou hast attained the sum  
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars  
Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,  
All secrets of the Deep, all Nature's works,  
Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,  
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,  
And all the rule, one empire. Only add  
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith;  
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,  
By name to come called Charity, the soul  
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth  
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess  
A Paradise within thee, happier far.  
Let us descend now, therefore, from this top  
Of speculation; for the hour precise  
Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards,  
By me encamped on yonder hill, expect  
Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword,  
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.  
We may no longer stay. Go, waken Eve;  
Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,  
Portending good, and all her spirits composed  
To meek submission: thou, at season fit,  
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard—  
Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,  
The great deliverance by her seed to come  
(For by the Woman's Seed) on all mankind—

That ye may live, which will be many days,  
Both in one faith unanimous; though sad  
With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered  
With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the hill.  
Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve  
Lay sleeping ran before, but found her waked;  
And thus with words not sad she him received:—

"Whence thou return'st and whither went'st I  
know;

For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,  
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good  
Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress  
Wearied, I fell asleep. But now lead on;  
In me is no delay; with thee to go  
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay  
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me  
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,  
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.  
This further consolation yet secure  
I carry hence: though all by me is lost,  
Such favour I unworthy am voutsafed,  
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore."

So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard  
Well pleased, but answered not; for now too nigh  
The Archangel stood, and from the other hill  
To their fixed station, all in bright array,  
The Cherubim descended, on the ground  
Gliding metéorous, as evening mist  
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,  
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel  
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,  
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,  
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,  
And vapour at the Libyan air adust,  
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat  
In either hand the hastening Angel caught  
Our lingering Parents, and to the eastern gate  
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast  
To the subjected plain—then disappeared.

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,  
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate  
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.  
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;  
The world was all before them, where to choose  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.  
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.

# PARADISE REGAINED

1665-1667

## THE FIRST BOOK

**I** WHO erewhile the happy Garden sung  
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing  
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,  
By one man's firm obedience fully tried  
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled  
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,  
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremit  
Into the desert, his victorious field  
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence  
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,  
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,  
And bear through highth or depth of Nature's bounds,  
With prosperous wing full summed, to tell of deeds  
Above heroic, though in secret done,  
And unrecorded left through many an age:  
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice  
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried  
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand  
To all baptized. To his great baptism flocked  
With awe the regions round, and with them came  
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed  
To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure,  
Unmarked, unknown. But him the Baptist soon  
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore  
As to his worthier, and would have resigned

To him his heavenly office. Nor was long  
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptized  
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a Dove  
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice  
From Heaven pronounced him his belovèd Son.  
That heard the Adversary, who, roving still  
About the world, at that assembly famed  
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine  
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man to whom  
Such high attest was given a while surveyed  
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,  
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air  
To council summons all his mighty Peers,  
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,  
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst,  
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:—

“O ancient Powers of Air and this wide World  
(For much more willingly I mention Air,  
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,  
Our hated habitation), well ye know  
How many ages, as the years of men,  
This Universe we have possessed, and ruled  
In manner at our will the affairs of Earth,  
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve  
Lost Paradise, deceived by me, though since  
With dread attending when that fatal wound  
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve  
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven  
Delay, for longest time to Him is short;  
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours  
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we  
Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound  
(At least, if so we can, and by the head  
Broken be not intended all our power  
To be infringed, our freedom and our being  
In this fair empire won of Earth and Air)—  
For this ill news I bring: The Woman's Seed,  
Destined to this, is late of woman born.  
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;  
But his growth now to youth's full power, displaying

All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve  
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.  
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim  
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all  
Invites, and in the consecrated stream  
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so  
Purified to receive him pure, or rather  
To do him honour as their King. All come,  
And he himself among them was baptized—  
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive  
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is  
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw  
The Prophet do him reverence; on him, rising  
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds  
Unfold her crystal doors; thence on his head  
A perfect Dove descend (whate'er it meant);  
And out of Heaven the sovereign voice I heard,  
'This is my Son beloved,—in him am pleased.'  
His mother, then, is mortal, but his Sire  
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven;  
And what will He not do to advance his Son?  
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,  
When his fierce thunder drove us to the Deep;  
Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems  
In all his lineaments, though in his face  
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.  
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge  
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,  
But must with something sudden be opposed  
(Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven  
    snares),  
Ere in the head of nations he appear,  
Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.  
I, when no other durst, sole undertook  
The dismal expedition to find out  
And ruin Adam, and the exploit performed  
Successfully: a calmer voyage now  
Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once  
Induces best to hope of like success."

He ended, and his words impression left



Of much amazement to the infernal crew,  
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay  
At these sad tidings. But no time was then  
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:  
Unanimous they all commit the care  
And management of this main enterprise  
To him, their great Dictator, whose attempt  
At first against mankind so well had thrived  
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march  
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,  
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,  
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.  
So to the coast of Jordan he directs  
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,  
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,  
This man of men, attested Son of God,  
Temptation and all guile on him to try—  
So to subvert whom he suspected raised  
To end his reign on Earth so long enjoyed:  
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfilled  
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,  
Of the Most High, who, in full frequency bright  
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake:—  
“Gabriel, this day, by proof, thou shalt behold,  
Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth  
With Man or men's affairs, how I begin  
To verify that solemn message late,  
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure  
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,  
Great in renown, and called the Son of God.  
Then told'st her, doubting how these things could be  
To her a virgin, that on her should come  
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest  
O'ershadow her. This Man, born and now upgrown,  
To shew him worthy of his birth divine  
And high prediction, henceforth I expose  
To Satan; let him tempt, and now assay  
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts  
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng  
Of his Apostasy. He might have learnt

Less overweening, since he failed in Job,  
Whose constant perseverance overcame  
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.  
He now shall know I can produce a man,  
Of female seed, far abler to resist  
All his solicitations, and at length  
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell—  
Winning by conquest what the first man lost  
By fallacy surprised. But first I mean  
To exercise him in the Wilderness;  
There he shall first lay down the rudiments  
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth  
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes.  
By humiliation and strong sufferance  
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,  
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;  
That all the Angels and æthereal Powers—  
They now, and men hereafter—may discern  
From what consummate virtue I have chose  
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,  
To earn salvation for the sons of men.”

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven  
Admiring stood a space; then into hymns  
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,  
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand  
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:—

“Victory and triumph to the Son of God,  
Now entering his great duel, not of arms  
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!  
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure  
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,  
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,  
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.  
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,  
And, devilish machinations, come to nought!”

So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tuned.  
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days  
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized,  
Musing and much revolving in his breast  
How best the mighty work he might begin

Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first  
Publish his godlike office now mature,  
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading  
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse  
With solitude, till, far from track of men,  
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,  
He entered now the bordering Desert wild,  
And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,  
His holy meditations thus pursued:—

“O what a multitude of thoughts at once  
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider  
What from within I feel myself, and hear  
What from without comes often to my ears,  
Ill sorting with my present state compared!  
When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good; myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years.  
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet;  
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew  
To such perfection that, ere yet my age  
Had measured twice six years, at our great Feast  
I went into the Temple, there to hear  
The teachers of our Law, and to propose  
What might improve my knowledge or their own,  
And was admired by all. Yct this not all  
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds  
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts—one while  
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;  
Then to subdue and quell, o’er all the earth,  
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,  
Till truth were freed, and equity restored:  
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first  
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,  
And make persuasion do the work of fear;  
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,  
Not wilfully misdoing, but unware  
Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.

These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,  
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,  
And said to me apart, 'High are thy thoughts,  
O Son! but nourish them, and let them soar  
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth  
Can raise them, though above example high;  
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.  
For know, thou art no son of mortal man;  
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,  
Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules  
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and sons of men  
A messenger from God foretold thy birth  
Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold  
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,  
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.  
At thy nativity a glorious quire  
Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung  
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,  
And told them the Messiah now was born,  
Where they might see him; and to thee they came,  
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st;  
For in the inn was left no better room.  
A Star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,  
Guided the Wise Men thither from the East,  
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;  
By whose bright course led on they found the place,  
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,  
By which they knew thee King of Israel born.  
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned  
By vision, found thee in the Temple, and spake,  
Before the altar and the vested priest.  
Like things of thee to all that present stood.'  
This having heard, straight I again revolved  
The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ  
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes  
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake  
I am—this chiefly, that my way must lie  
Through many a hard assay, even to the death,  
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,  
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'

Full weight must be transferred upon my head.  
Yet, neither thus disheartened or dismayed,  
The time prefixed I waited; when behold  
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,  
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come  
Before Messiah, and his way prepare!  
I, as all others, to his baptism came,  
Which I believed was from above; but he  
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed  
Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heaven)—  
Me him whose harbinger he was; and first  
Refused on me baptism to confer,  
As much his greater, and was hardly won.  
But, as I rose out of the laving stream,  
Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence  
The Spirit descended on me like a Dove;  
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,  
Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounced me his,  
Me his belovèd Son, in whom alone  
He was well pleased: by which I knew the time  
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,  
But openly begin, as best becomes  
The authority which I derived from Heaven.  
And now by some strong motion I am led  
Into this wilderness; to what intent  
I learn not yet. Perhaps I need not know;  
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.”  
So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise,  
And, looking round, on every side beheld  
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades.  
The way he came, not having marked return,  
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;  
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts  
Accompanied of things past and to come  
Lodged in his breast as well might recommend  
Such solitude before choicest society.  
Full forty days he passed—whether on hill  
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night  
Under the covert of some ancient oak  
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,

Or harboured in one cave, is not revealed;  
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,  
Till those days ended; hungered then at last  
Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild,  
Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed; his walk  
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm;  
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.  
But now an aged man in rural weeds,  
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,  
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve  
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,  
To warm him wet returned from field at eve,  
He saw approach; who first with curious eye  
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake:—

“Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,  
So far from path or road of men, who pass  
In troop or caravan, for single none  
Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here  
His carcass, pined with hunger and with droughth.  
I ask the rather, and the more admire,  
For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late  
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford  
Of Jordan honoured so, and called thee Son  
Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes  
Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth  
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),  
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,  
What happens new; fame also finds us out.”

To whom the Son of God:—“Who brought me  
hither  
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.”  
“By miracle he may,” replied the swain;  
“What other way I see not; for we here  
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured  
More than the camel, and to drink go far—  
Men to much misery and hardship born.  
But, if thou be the Son of God, command  
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;  
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve  
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.”



He ended, and the Son of God replied:—  
“Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written  
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),  
Man lives not by bread only, but each word  
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed  
Our fathers here with manna? In the Mount  
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank;  
And forty days Eliah without food  
Wandered this barren waste; the same I now.  
Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,  
Knowing who I am, as I know who *thou* art?”

Whom thus answered the Arch-Fiend, now un-  
disguised:—

“'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate  
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,  
Kept not my happy station, but was driven  
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep—  
Yet to that hideous place not so confined  
By rigour unconniving but that oft,  
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy  
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,  
Or range in the Air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens  
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.  
I came, among the Sons of God, when he  
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,  
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;  
And, when to all his Angels he proposed  
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud,  
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,  
I undertook that office, and the tongues  
Of all his flattering prophets glibbed with lies  
To his destruction, as I had in charge:  
For what he bids I do. Though I have lost  
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost  
To be beloved of God, I have not lost  
To love, at least contemplate and admire,  
What I see excellent in good, or fair,  
Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense.  
What can be then less in me than desire  
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know

Declared the Son of God, to hear attent  
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?  
Men generally think me much a foe  
To all mankind. Why should I? they to me  
Never did wrong or violence. By them  
I lost not what I lost; rather by them  
I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell  
Copartner in these regions of the World,  
If not disposer—lend them oft my aid,  
Oft my advice by presages and signs,  
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,  
Whereby they may direct their future life.  
Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain  
Companions of my misery and woe!  
At first it may be; but, long since with woe  
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof  
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,  
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load;  
Small consolation, then, were Man adjoined.  
This wounds me most (what can it less?) that Man,  
Man fallen, shall be restored, I never more."

To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:—  
"Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies  
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,  
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come  
Into the Heaven of Heavens. Thou com'st indeed,  
As a poor miserable captive thrall  
Comes to the place where he before had sat  
Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,  
Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,  
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,  
To all the host of Heaven. The happy place  
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy—  
Rather inflames thy torment, representing  
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable;  
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.  
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!  
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear  
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?  
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem

Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him  
With all inflictions? but his patience won.  
The other service was thy chosen task,  
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;  
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.  
Yet thou pretend'st to truth! all oracles  
By thee are given, and what confessed more true  
Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,  
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.  
But what have been thy answers? what but dark,  
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,  
Which they who asked have seldom understood,  
And, not well understood, as good not known?  
Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,  
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct  
To fly or follow what concerned him most,  
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?  
For God hath justly given the nations up  
To thy delusions; justly, since they fell  
Idolatrous. But, when his purpose is  
Among them to declare his providence,  
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,  
But from him, or his Angels president  
In every province, who, themselves disdaining  
To approach thy temples, give thee in command  
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say  
To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,  
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st;  
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.  
But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched;  
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse  
The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,  
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice  
Shalt be enquired at Delphos or elsewhere—  
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.  
God hath now sent his living Oracle  
Into the world to teach his final will,  
And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell  
In pious hearts, an inward oracle  
To all truth requisite for men to know."

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,  
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,  
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:—

“Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,  
And urged me hard with doings which not will,  
But misery, hath wrested from me. Where  
Easily canst thou find one miserable,  
And not inforced oft-times to part from truth,  
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,  
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?  
But thou art placed above me; thou art Lord;  
From thee I can, and must, submit, endure  
Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.  
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,  
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,  
And tunable as sylvan pipe or song;  
What wonder, then, if I delight to hear  
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire  
Virtue who follow not her lore. Permit me  
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),  
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.  
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,  
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest  
To tread his sacred courts, and minister  
About his altar, handling holy things,  
Praying or vowing, and voutsafed his voice  
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet  
Inspired: disdain not such access to me.”

To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow:—  
“Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,  
I bid not, or forbid. Do as thou find'st  
Permission from above; thou canst not more.”

He added not; and Satan, bowing low  
His gray dissimulation, disappeared,  
Into thin air diffused: for now began  
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade  
The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couched;  
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

## THE SECOND BOOK

MEANWHILE the new-baptized, who yet remained  
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen  
Him whom they heard so late expressly called  
Jesus Messiah, Son of God, declared,  
And on that high authority had believed,  
And with him talked, and with him lodged—I mean  
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,  
With others, though in Holy Writ not named—  
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,  
So lately found and so abruptly gone,  
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,  
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.  
Sometimes they thought he might be only shewn,  
And for a time caught up to God, as once  
Moses was in the Mount and missing long,  
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels  
Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.  
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care  
Sought lost Eliah, so in each place these  
Nigh to Bethabara—in Jericho  
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,  
Machærus, and each town or city walled  
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,  
Or in Peræa—but returned in vain.  
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,  
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,  
Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),  
Close in a cottage low together got,  
Their unexpected loss and complaints outbreathed:—  
“Alas, from what high hope to what relapse  
Unlooked for are we fallen! Our eyes beheld  
Messiah certainly now come, so long  
Expected of our fathers; we have heard  
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.  
‘Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand;  
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored.’  
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned

Into perplexity and new amaze.  
For whither is he gone? what accident  
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire  
After appearance, and again prolong  
Our expectation? God of Israel,  
Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come.  
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress  
Thy Chosen, to what highth their power unjust  
They have exalted, and behind them cast  
All fear of Thee; arise, and vindicate  
Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!  
But let us wait; thus far He hath performed—  
Sent his Anointed, and to us revealed him  
By his great Prophet pointed at and shown  
In public, and with him we have conversed.  
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears  
Lay on his providence; He will not fail,  
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall—  
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:  
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return.”

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume  
To find whom at the first they found unsought.  
But to his mother Mary, when she saw  
Others returned from baptism, not her Son,  
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,  
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,  
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised  
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:—

“Oh, what avails me now that honour high,  
To have conceived of God, or that salute,  
‘Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!’  
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,  
And fears as eminent above the lot  
Of other women, by the birth I bore:  
In such a season born, when scarce a shed  
Could be obtained to shelter him or me  
From the bleak air? A stable was our warmth,  
A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly  
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king  
Were dead, who sought his life, and, missing, filled



With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.  
From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth  
Hath been our dwelling many years; his life  
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,  
Little suspicious to any king. But now,  
Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,  
By John the Baptist, and in public shewn,  
Son owned from Heaven by his Father's voice,  
I looked for some great change. To honour? no;  
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,  
That to the fall and rising he should be  
Of many in Israel, and to a sign  
Spoken against—that through my very soul  
A sword shall pierce. This is my favoured lot,  
My exaltation to afflictions high!  
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest!  
I will not argue that, nor will repine.  
But where delays he now? Some great intent  
Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had seen,  
I lost him, but so found as well I saw  
He could not lose himself, but went about  
His Father's business. What he meant I mused—  
Since understand; much more his absence now  
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.  
But I to wait with patience am inured;  
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things  
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.”  
Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind  
Recalling what remarkably had passed  
Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts  
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling:  
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,  
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,  
Into himself descended, and at once  
All his great work to come before him set—  
How to begin, how to accomplish best  
His end of being on Earth, and mission high.  
For Satan, with sly preface to return,  
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone  
Up to the middle region of thick air,

Where all his Potentates in council sate.  
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,  
Solicitous and blank, he thus began:—

“Princes, Heaven’s ancient Sons, Æthereal Thrones—  
Dæmonian Spirits now, from the element  
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called  
Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath  
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats  
Without new trouble!)—such an enemy  
Is risen to invade us, who no less  
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell.  
I, as I undertook, and with the vote  
Consenting in full frequence was impowered,  
Have found him, viewed him, tasted him; but find  
Far other labour to be undergone  
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,  
Though Adam by his wife’s allurements fell,  
However to this Man inferior far—  
If he be Man by mother’s side, at least  
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorned,  
Perfections absolute, graces divine,  
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.  
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence  
Of my success with Eve in Paradise  
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure  
Of like succeeding here. I summon all  
Rather to be in readiness with hand  
Or counsel to assist, lest I, who erst  
Thought none my equal, now be overmatched.”

So spoke the old Serpent, doubting, and from all  
With clamour was assured their utmost aid  
At his command; when from amidst them rose  
Belial, the dissolutes Spirit that fell,  
The sensualest, and, after Asmodai,  
The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advised:—

“Set women in his eye and in his walk,  
Among daughters of men the fairest found.  
Many are in each region passing fair  
As the noon sky, more like to goddesses  
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,

Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues  
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild  
And sweet allayed, yet terrible to approach,  
Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw  
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.  
Such object hath the power to soften and tame  
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,  
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,  
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead  
At will the manliest, resolutesst breast,  
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.  
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart  
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,  
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives."

To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:—  
"Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st  
All others by thyself. Because of old  
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring  
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,  
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.  
Before the Flood, thou, with thy lusty crew,  
False titled Sons of God, roaming the Earth,  
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,  
And coupled with them, and begot a race.  
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,  
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,  
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain-side,  
In valley or green meadow, to waylay  
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,  
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,  
Or Amydone, Syrinx, many more  
Too long—then lay'st thy scapes on names adored,  
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,  
Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan? But these haunts  
Delight not all. Among the sons of men  
How many have with a smile made small account  
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned  
All her assaults, on worthier things intent!  
Remember that Pellean conqueror,  
A youth, how all the beauties of the East

He slightly viewed, and slightly overpassed;  
How he surnamed of Africa dismissed,  
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.  
For Solomon, he lived at ease, and, full  
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond  
Higher design than to enjoy his state;  
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.  
But he whom we attempt is wiser far  
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,  
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment  
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,  
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,  
On whom his leisure will voutsafed an eye  
Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,  
As sitting queen adored on Beauty's throne,  
Descend with all her winning charms begirt  
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once  
Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),  
How would one look from his majestic brow,  
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,  
Discountenance her despised, and put to rout  
All her array, her female pride deject,  
Or turn to reverent awe! For Beauty stands  
In the admiration only of weak minds  
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her plumes  
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,  
At every sudden slighting quite abashed.  
Therefore, with manlier objects we must try  
His constancy—with such as have more shew  
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise  
(Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked);  
Or that which only seems to satisfy  
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond.  
And now I know he hungers, where no food  
Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness:  
The rest commit to me; I shall let pass  
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."

He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;  
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band  
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile,

To be at hand and at his beck appear,  
If cause were to unfold some active scene  
Of various persons, each to know his part;  
Then to the desert takes with these his flight,  
Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,  
After forty days' fasting, had remained,  
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said:—

“Where will this end? Four times ten days I have  
passed

Wandering this woody maze, and human food  
Nor tasted, nor had appetite. That fast  
To virtue I impute not, or count part  
Of what I suffer here. If nature need not,  
Or God support nature without repast,  
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?  
But now I feel I hunger; which declares  
Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God  
Can satisfy that need some other way,  
Though hunger still remain. So it remain  
Without this body's wasting, I content me,  
And from the sting of famine fear no harm;  
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed  
Me hungering more to do my Father's will.”

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son  
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down  
Under the hospitable covert nigh  
Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,  
And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,  
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.  
Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,  
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks  
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn—  
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they  
brought;

He saw the Prophet also, how he fled  
Into the desert, and how there he slept  
Under a juniper—then how, awaked,  
He found his supper on the coals prepared,  
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,  
And eat the second time after repose,

The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:  
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,  
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.  
Thus wore out night; and now the harald Lark  
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry  
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song.  
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose  
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;  
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.  
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,  
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,  
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;  
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw—  
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,  
With chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud.  
Thither he bent his way, determined there  
To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade  
High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,  
That opened in the midst a woody scene;  
Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught Art),  
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt  
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it round;  
When suddenly a man before him stood,  
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,  
As one in city or court or palace bred,  
And with fair speech these words to him addressed:—  
“With granted leave officious I return,  
But much more wonder that the Son of God  
In this wild solitude so long should bide,  
Of all things destitute, and, well I know,  
Not without hunger. Others of some note,  
As story tells, have trod this wilderness:  
The fugitive Bond-woman, with her son,  
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief  
By a providing Angel; all the race  
Of Israel here had famished, had not God  
Rained from heaven manna; and that Prophet bold,  
Native of Thebez, wandering here, was fed  
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.  
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,



Forty and more deserted here indeed."

To whom thus Jesus:—"What conclud'st thou hence? They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none."

"How hast thou hunger then?" Satan replied.

"Tell me, if food were now before thee set, Wouldst thou not eat?" "Thereafter as I like The giver," answered Jesus. "Why should that Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle Fiend.

"Hast thou not right to all created things? Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee Duty and service, nor to stay till bid, But tender all their power? Nor mention I Meats by the law unclean, or offered first To idols—those young Daniel could refuse; Nor proffered by an enemy—though who Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold, Nature ashamed, or, better to express, Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed From all the elements her choicest store, To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord With honour. Only deign to sit and eat."

He spake no dream; for, as his words had end, Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld, In ample space under the broadest shade, A table richly spread in regal mode, With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort And savour—beasts of chase, or fowl of game, In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled, Grisamber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore, Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin, And exquisitest name, for which was drained Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast Alas! how simple, to these cates compared, Was that crude Apple that diverted Eve! And at a stately sideboard, by the wine, That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more, Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood, Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades

With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,  
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed  
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since  
Of faery damsels met in forest wide  
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,  
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.  
And all the while harmonious airs were heard  
Of chiming strings or charming pipes; and winds  
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned  
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.  
Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now  
His invitation earnestly renewed:—

“What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?  
These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict  
Defends the touching of these viands pure;  
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,  
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,  
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.  
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,  
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay  
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.  
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat.”

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:—  
“Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?  
And who withholds my power that right to use?  
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,  
When and where likes me best, I can command?  
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,  
Command a table in this wilderness;  
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,  
Arrayed in glory, on my cup to attend:  
Why shouldst thou, then, obtrude this diligence  
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?  
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?  
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,  
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.”

To whom thus answered Satan, malecontent:—  
“That I have also power to give thou seest;  
If of that power I bring thee voluntary  
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,

And rather opportunely in this place  
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,  
Why shouldst thou not accept it? But I see  
What I can do or offer is suspect.  
Of these things others quickly will dispose,  
Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With  
that

Both table and provision vanished quite,  
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard;  
Only the importune Tempter still remained,  
And with these words his temptation pursued:—  
"By hunger, that each other creature tames,  
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved;  
Thy temperance, invincible besides,  
For no allurement yields to appetite;  
And all thy heart is set on high designs,  
High actions. But wherewith to be achieved?  
Great acts require great means of enterprize;  
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,  
A carpenter thy father known, thyself  
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,  
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.  
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire  
To greatness? whence authority deriv'st?  
What followers, what retin'ue canst thou gain,  
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,  
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?  
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.  
What raised Antipater the Edomite,  
And his son Herod placed on Juda's throne,  
Thy throne, but gold, that got him puissant friends?  
Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,  
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap—  
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me.  
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;  
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,  
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."  
To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:—  
"Yet wealth without these three is impotent  
To gain dominion, or to keep it gained—

Witness those ancient empires of the earth,  
In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolved;  
But men endued with these have oft attained,  
In lowest poverty, to highest deeds—  
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad  
Whose offspring on the throne of Juda sate  
So many ages, and shall yet regain  
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.  
Among the Heathen (for throughout the world  
To me is not unknown what hath been done  
Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember  
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?  
For I esteem those names of men so poor,  
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn  
Riches, though offered from the hand of kings  
And what in me seems wanting but that I  
May also in this poverty as soon  
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?  
Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools,  
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt  
To slacken virtue and abate her edge  
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.  
What if with like aversion I reject  
Riches and realms! Yet not for that a crown,  
Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,  
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,  
To him who wears the regal diadem,  
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;  
For therein stands the office of a king,  
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,  
That for the public all this weight he bears.  
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules  
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—  
Which every wise and virtuous man attains;  
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule  
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,  
Subject himself to anarchy within,  
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.  
But to guide nations in the way of truth  
By saving doctrine, and from error lead

To know, and, knowing, worship God aright,  
Is yet more kingly. This attracts the soul,  
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;  
That other o'er the body only reigns,  
And oft by force—which to a generous mind  
So reigning can be no sincere delight.  
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought  
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down  
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.  
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,  
And for thy reason why they should be sought—  
To gain a sceptre, ofttest better missed."

### THE THIRD BOOK

So SPAKE the Son of God; and Satan stood  
A while as mute, confounded what to say,  
What to reply, confuted and convinced  
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift;  
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,  
With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts:—  
"I see thou know'st what is of use to know,  
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;  
Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words  
To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart  
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.  
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,  
Thy counsel would be as the oracle  
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems  
On Aaron's breast, or tongue of Seers old  
Infallible; or, wert thou sought to deeds  
That might require the array of war, thy skill  
Of conduct would be such that all the world  
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist  
In battle, though against thy few in arms.  
These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide?  
Affecting private life, or more obscure  
In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive

All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself  
The fame and glory—glory, the reward  
That sole excites to high attempts the flame  
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure  
Æthereal, who all pleasures else despise,  
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,  
And dignities and powers, all but the highest?  
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son  
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these  
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held  
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down  
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quelled  
The Pontic king, and in triumph' had rode.  
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,  
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.  
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,  
The more he grew in years, the more inflamed  
With glory, wept that he had lived so long  
Inglorious. But thou yet art not too late."

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:—  
"Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth  
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect  
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.  
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,  
The people's praise, if always praise unmixed?  
And what the people but a herd confused,  
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol  
Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the  
praise?

They praise and they admire they know not what,  
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;  
And what delight to be by such extolled,  
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?  
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise—  
His lot who dares be singularly good.  
The intelligent among them and the wise  
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.  
This is true glory and renown—when God,  
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks  
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven



To all his Angels, who with true applause  
Recount his praises. Thus he did to Job,  
When, to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,  
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,  
He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'  
Famous he was in Heaven; on Earth less known,  
Where glory is false glory, attributed  
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.  
They err who count it glorious to subdue  
By conquest far and wide, to overrun  
Large countries, and in field great battles win,  
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies  
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave  
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,  
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more  
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind  
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,  
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;  
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,  
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,  
Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?  
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;  
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,  
Rowling in brutish vices, and deformed,  
Violent or shameful death their due reward.  
But, if there be in glory aught of good;  
It may by means far different be attained,  
Without ambition, war, or violence—  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance. I mention still  
Him whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,  
Made famous in a land and times obscure;  
Who names not now with honour patient Job?  
Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)  
By what he taught and suffered for so doing,  
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now  
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.  
Yet, if for fame and glory aught be done,  
Aught suffered—if young African for fame  
His wasted country freed from Punic rage—

The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,  
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.  
Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,  
Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but His  
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.”  
To whom the Tempter, murmuring, thus replied:  
“Think not so slight of glory, therein least  
Resembling thy great Father. He seeks glory,  
And for his glory all things made, all things  
Orders and governs; nor content in Heaven,  
By all his Angels glorified, requires  
Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,  
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.  
Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,  
Glory he requires, and glory he receives,  
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,  
Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declared;  
From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts.”

To whom our Saviour fervently replied:  
“And reason; since his Word all things produced,  
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,  
But to shew forth his goodness, and impart  
His good communicable to every soul  
Freely; of whom what could He less expect  
Than glory and benediction—that is, thanks—  
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense  
From them who could return him nothing else.  
And, not returning that, would likeliest render  
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?  
Hard recompense, unsuitable return  
For so much good, so much beneficence!  
But why should man seek glory, who of his own  
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs  
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame—  
Who, for so many benefits received,  
Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false  
And so of all true good himself despoiled;  
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take  
That which to God alone of right belongs?  
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,

That who advance his glory, not their own,  
Them he himself to glory will advance."

So spake the Son of God; and here again  
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck  
With guilt of his own sin—for he himself,  
Insatiable of glory, had lost all;

Yet of another plea bethought him soon:—

"Of glory, as thou wilt," said he, "so deem;  
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.  
But to a Kingdom thou art born—ordained  
To sit upon thy father David's throne,  
By mother's side thy father, though thy right  
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part  
Easily from possession won with arms.  
Judæa now and all the Promised Land,  
Reduced a province under Roman yoke,  
Obeys Tiberius, nor is always ruled  
With temperate sway: oft have they violated  
The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,  
Abominations rather, as did once  
Antiochus. And think'st thou to regain  
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?  
So did not Machabeus. He indeed  
Retired unto the Desert, but with arms;  
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed  
That by strong hand his family obtained,  
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,  
With Modin and her suburbs once content.  
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal  
And duty—zeal and duty are not slow,  
But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait:  
They themselves rather are occasion best—  
Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free  
Thy country from her heathen servitude.  
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify,  
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign—  
The happier reign the sooner it begins.  
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?"

To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:—  
"All things are best fulfilled in their due time;

And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.  
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told  
That it shall never end, so, when begin  
The Father in his purpose hath decreed—  
He in whose hand all times and seasons rowl.  
What if he hath decreed that I shall first  
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,  
By tribulations, injuries, insults,  
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,  
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting  
Without distrust or doubt, that He may know  
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best  
Can suffer best can do, best reign who first  
Well hath obeyed—just trial ere I merit  
My exaltation without change or end.  
But what concerns it *thee* when I begin  
My everlasting Kingdom? Why art *thou*  
Solicitous? What moves *thy* inquisition?  
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,  
And my promotion will be thy destruction?"

To whom the Tempter, inly racked, replied:—  
"Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost  
Of my reception into grace; what worse?  
For where no hope is left is left no fear.  
If there be worse, the expectation more  
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.  
I would be at the worst; worst is my port,  
My harbour, and my ultimate repose,  
The end I would attain, my final good.  
My error was my error, and my crime  
My crime; whatever, for itself condemned,  
And will alike be punished, whether thou  
Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow  
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,  
From that placid aspect and meek regard,  
Rather than aggravate my evil state,  
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire  
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)  
A shelter and a kind of shading cool  
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.

If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,  
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?  
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,  
That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their King!  
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detained  
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!  
No wonder; for, though in thee be united  
What of perfection can in Man be found,  
Or human nature can receive, consider  
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent  
At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,  
And once a year Jerusalem, few days'  
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?  
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,  
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts—  
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight  
In all things that to greatest actions lead.  
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever  
Timorous, and loth, with novice modesty  
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)  
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventrous.  
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit  
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes  
The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state—  
Sufficient introduction to inform  
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,  
And regal mysteries; that thou may'st know  
How best their opposition to withstand."

With that (such power was given him then), he  
took

The Son of God up to a mountain high.  
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet  
A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide  
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flowed,  
The one winding, the other straight, and left between  
Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,  
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.  
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine;  
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills;  
Huge cities and high-towered, that well might seem

The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large  
The prospect was that here and there was room  
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.  
To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought  
Our Saviour, and new train of words began:—

“ Well have we speeded, and o’er hill and dale,  
Forest, and field, and flood, temples and towers,  
Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold’st  
Assyria, and her empire’s ancient bounds,  
Araxes and the Caspian lake; thence on  
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,  
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,  
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drouth:  
Here, Nineveh, of length within her wall  
Several days’ journey, built by Ninus old,  
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,  
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success  
Israel in long captivity still mourns;  
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,  
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice  
Judah and all thy father David’s house  
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,  
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,  
His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there;  
Ecbatana her structure vast there shews,  
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;  
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,  
The drink of none but kings; of later fame,  
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,  
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there  
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,  
Turning with easy eye, thou may’st behold.  
All these the Parthian (now some ages past  
By great Arsaces led, who founded first  
That empire) under his dominion holds,  
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.  
And just in time thou com’st to have a view  
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king  
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host  
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild



Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid

He marches now in haste. See, though from far,  
His thousands, in what martial equipage

They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,  
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit—

All horsemen, in which flight they must excel;

See how in warlike muster they appear,

In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.”

He looked, and saw what numbers numberless

The city gates outpoured, light-armed troops

In coats of mail and military pride.

In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,

Prauncing their riders bore, the flower and choice

Of many provinces from bound to bound—

From Arachosia, from Candaor east,

And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs

Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;

From Atropatia, and the neighbouring plains

Of Adiabene, Media, and the south

Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.

He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,

How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot

Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face

Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;

The field all iron cast a gleaming brown.

Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor, on each horn,

Cuirassiers all in steel for standing flight,

Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers

Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers

A multitude, with spades and axes armed,

To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,

Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay

With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke:

Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,

And waggons fraught with utensils of war.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,

When Agrican, with all his northern powers,

Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,

The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win

The fairest of her sex, Angelica,

His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,  
Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemane.  
Such and so numerous was their chivalry;  
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presumed,  
And to our Saviour thus his words renewed:—

“That thou may'st know I seek not to engage  
Thy virtue, and not every way secure  
On no slight grounds thy safety, hear and mark  
To what end I have brought thee hither, and shew  
All this fair sight. Thy kingdom, though foretold  
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou  
Endeavour, as thy father David did,  
Thou never shalt obtain: prediction still  
In all things, and all men, supposes means;  
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.  
But say thou wert possessed of David's throne  
By free consent of all, none opposite,  
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope  
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure  
Between two such enclosing enemies,  
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these  
Thou must make sure thy own: the Parthian first,  
By my advice, as nearer, and of late  
Found able by invasion to annoy  
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,  
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound,  
Maugre the Roman. It shall be my task  
To render thee the Parthian at dispose,  
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.  
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,  
That which alone can truly reinstall thee  
In David's royal seat, his true successor—  
Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes  
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve  
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:  
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost  
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old  
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,  
This offer sets before thee to deliver.  
These if from servitude thou shalt restore

To their inheritance, then, nor till then,  
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,  
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,  
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."

To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved:—  
"Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm  
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,  
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,  
Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear  
Vented much policy, and projects deep  
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,  
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.  
Means I must use, thou say'st; prediction else  
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne!  
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee  
Were better farthest off), is not yet come.  
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack  
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need  
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome  
Luggage of war there shewn me—argument  
Of human weakness rather than of strength.  
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes,  
I must deliver, if I mean to reign  
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway  
To just extent over all Israel's sons!  
But whence to *thee* this zeal? Where was it then  
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,  
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride  
Of numbering Israel—which cost the lives  
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites  
By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal  
To Israel then, the same that now to me.  
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they  
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off  
From God to worship calves, the deities  
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,  
And all the idolatries of heathen round,  
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;  
Nor in the land of their captivity  
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought

The God of their forefathers, but so died  
Impenitent, and left a race behind  
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce  
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,  
And God with idols in their worship joined.  
Should I of these the liberty regard,  
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,  
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,  
Headlong would follow, and to their gods perhaps  
Of Bethel and of Dan? No; let them serve  
Their enemies who serve idols with God.  
Yet He at length, time to himself best known,  
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call  
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,  
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,  
While to their native land with joy they haste,  
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,  
When to the Promised Land their fathers passed.  
To his due time and providence I leave them."

So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend  
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.  
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

## THE FOURTH BOOK

PERPLEXED and troubled at his bad success  
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,  
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope  
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric  
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,  
So little here, nay lost. But Eve was Eve;  
This far his over-match, who, self-deceived  
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed  
The strength he was to cope with, or his own.  
But—as a man who had been matchless held  
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,  
To salve his credit, and for very spite,  
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,

And never cease, though to his shame the more;  
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,  
About the wine-press where sweet must is poured,  
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;  
Or surging waves against a solid rock,  
Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew,  
(Vain battery!) and in froth or bubbles end—  
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse  
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,  
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,  
And his vain importunity pursues.  
He brought our Saviour to the western side  
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold  
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,  
Washed by the southern sea, and on the north  
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills  
That screened the fruits of the earth and seats of men  
From cold Septentrion blasts; thence in the midst  
Divided by a river, off whose banks  
On each side an Imperial City stood,  
With towers and temples proudly elevate  
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,  
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,  
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,  
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes  
Above the highth of mountains interposed—  
By what strange parallax, or optic skill  
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass  
Of telescope, were curious to enquire.  
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:—  
“The city which thou seest no other deem  
Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth  
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched  
Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,  
Above the rest lifting his stately head  
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel  
Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,  
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high  
The structure, skill of noblest architects,  
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,

Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires.  
Many a fair edifice besides, more like  
Houses of gods—so well I have disposed  
My aerie microscope—thou may'st behold,  
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs  
Carved work, the hand of famed artificers  
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.  
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see  
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:  
Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces  
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;  
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;  
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings;  
Or embassies from regions far remote,  
In various habits, on the Appian road,  
Or on the Æmilian—some from farthest south,  
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,  
Meroë, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,  
The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea;  
From the Asian kings (and Parthian among these),  
From India and the Golden Chersoness,  
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,  
Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed;  
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west;  
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians north  
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.  
All nations now to Rome obedience pay—  
To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain,  
In ample territory, wealth and power,  
Civility of manners, arts and arms,  
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer  
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,  
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,  
Shared among petty kings too far removed;  
These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all  
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.  
This Emperor hath no son, and now is old,  
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired  
To Capreæ, an island small but strong  
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there



His horrid lusts in private to enjoy;  
Committing to a wicked favourite  
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious;  
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,  
Endued with regal virtues as thou art,  
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,  
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,  
Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,  
A victor-people free from servile yoke!  
And with my help thou may'st; to me the power  
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.  
Aim, therefore, at no less than all the world;  
Aim at the highest; without the highest attained,  
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,  
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."  
To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:—  
"Nor doth this grandeur and majestic shew  
Of luxury, though called magnificence,  
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,  
Much less my mind; though thou should'st add to tell  
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts  
On citron tables or Atlantic stone  
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read),  
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,  
Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,  
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, imbossed with gems  
And studs of pearl—to me should'st tell, who thirst  
And hunger still. Then embassies thou shew'st  
From nations far and nigh! What honour that,  
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear  
So many hollow compliments and lies,  
Outlandish flatteries? Then proceed'st to talk  
Of the Emperor, how easily subdued,  
How gloriously. I shall, thou say'st, expel  
A brutish monster: what if I withal  
Expel a Devil who first made him such?  
Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out;  
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free  
That people, victor once, now vile and base,  
Deservedly made vassal—who, once just,

Frugal and mild, and temperate, conquered well,  
But govern ill the nations under yoke,  
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all  
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown  
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;  
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured  
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed;  
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,  
And from the daily Scene effeminate.  
What wise and valiant man would seek to free  
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,  
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?  
Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit  
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree  
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,  
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash  
All monarchies besides throughout the world;  
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end.  
Means there shall be to this; but what the means  
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."

To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied:—  
"I see all offers made by me how slight  
Thou valu'st, because offered, and reject'st.  
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,  
Or nothing more than still to contradict.  
On the other side know also thou that I  
On what I offer set as high esteem,  
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught.  
All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,  
The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give  
(For, given to me, I give to whom I please),  
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else—  
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,  
And worship me as thy superior Lord  
(Easily done), and hold them all of me;  
For what can less so great a gift deserve?"

Whom thus our Saviour answered with disdain:—  
"I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;  
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter  
The abominable terms, impious condition.

But I endure the time, till which expired  
Thou hast permission on me. It is written,  
The first of all commandments, 'Thou shalt worship  
The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve;  
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound  
To worship thee, accursed? now more accursed  
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,  
And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.  
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given!  
Permitted rather, and by thee usurped;  
Other donation none thou canst produce.  
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,  
God over all supreme? If given to thee,  
By thee how fairly is the Giver now  
Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost  
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame  
As offer them to me, the Son of God—  
To me my own, on such abhorrèd pact,  
That I fall down and worship thee as God?  
Get thee behind me! Plain thou now appear'st  
That Evil One, Satan for ever damned."

To whom the Fiend, with fear abashed, replied:—  
"Be not so sore offended, Son of God—  
Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men—  
If I, to try whether in higher sort  
Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed  
What both from Men and Angels I receive,  
Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth  
Nations besides from all the quartered winds—  
God of this World invoked, and World beneath.  
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold  
To me most fatal, me it most concerns.  
The trial hath indamaged thee no way,  
Rather more honour left and more esteem;  
Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.  
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,  
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more  
Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not.  
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined  
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more

To contemplation and profound dispute;  
As by that early action may be judged,  
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st  
Alone into the Temple, there wast found  
Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant  
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,  
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shews the man,  
As morning shews the day. Be famous, then,  
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,  
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world  
In knowledge; all things in it comprehend.  
All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,  
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote;  
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach  
To admiration, led by Nature's light;  
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,  
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st.  
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,  
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?  
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute  
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?  
Error by his own arms is best evinced.  
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,  
Westward, much nearer by south-west; behold  
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,  
Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—  
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
And eloquence, native to famous wits  
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,  
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.  
See there the olive-grove of Academe,  
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird  
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;  
There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound  
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites  
To studious musing; there Ilissus rowls  
His whispering stream. Within the walls then view  
The schools of ancient sages—his who bred  
Great Alexander to subdue the world,  
Lyceum there; and painted Stoa next.

There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power  
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit  
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,  
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,  
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,  
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer called,  
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own.  
Thence what the lofty grave Tragedians taught  
In chorus or iambic, teachers best  
Of moral prudence, with delight received  
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat  
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,  
High actions and high passions best describing.  
Thence to the famous Orators repair,  
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence  
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,  
Shook the Arsenal, and fulminated over Greece  
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.  
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,  
From heaven descended to the low-roofed house  
Of Socrates—see there his tenement—  
Whom, well inspired, the Oracle pronounced  
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth  
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools  
Of Academics old and new, with those  
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect  
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe.  
These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,  
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;  
These rules will render thee a king complete  
Within thyself, much more with empire joined.”  
To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied:—  
“Think not but that I know these things; or, think  
I know them not, not therefore am I short  
Of knowing what I ought. He who receives  
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,  
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;  
But these are false, or little else but dreams,  
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.  
The first and wisest of them all professed

To know this only, that he nothing knew;  
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits;  
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;  
Others in virtue placed felicity,  
But virtue joined with riches and long life;  
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;  
The Stoic last in philosophic pride,  
By him called virtue, and his virtuous man,  
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,  
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,  
As fearing God nor man, contemning all  
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life—  
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can;  
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,  
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.  
Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,  
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,  
And how the World began, and how Man fell,  
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?  
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry;  
And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves  
All glory arrogate, to God give none;  
Rather accuse him under usual names,  
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite  
Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these  
True wisdom finds her not, or by delusion  
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,  
An empty cloud. However, many books,  
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads  
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not  
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,  
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)  
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,  
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,  
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys  
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,  
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.  
Or, if I would delight my private hours  
With music or with poem, where so soon  
As in our native language can I find



That solace? All our Law and Story strewed  
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,  
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon  
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare  
That rather Greece from us these arts derived—  
Ill imitated while they loudest sing  
The vices of their deities, and their own,  
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating  
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.  
Remove their swelling epithetes, thick-laid  
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,  
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,  
Will far be found unworthy to compare  
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,  
Where God is praised aright and godlike men,  
The Holiest of Holies and his Saints  
(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee);  
Unless where moral virtue is expressed  
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.  
Their orators thou then extoll'st as those  
The top of eloquence—statists indeed,  
And lovers of their country, as may seem;  
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,  
As men divinely taught, and better teaching  
The solid rules of civil government,  
In their majestic, unaffected style,  
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.  
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,  
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,  
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;  
These only, with our Law, best form a king.”

So spake the Son of God; but Satan, now  
Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),  
Thus to our Saviour, with stern brow, replied:—

“Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,  
Kingdom nor empire, pleases thee, nor aught  
By me proposed in life contemplative  
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,  
What dost thou in this world? The Wilderness  
For thee is fittest place: I found thee there,

And thither will return thee. Yet remember  
What I foretell thee; soon thou shalt have cause  
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus  
Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,  
Which would have set thee in short time with ease  
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,  
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,  
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.  
Now, contrary—if I read aught in heaven,  
Or heaven write aught of fate—by what the stars  
Voluminous, or single characters  
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,  
Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,  
Attends thee; scorns, reproaches, injuries,  
Violence and stripes, and, lastly, cruel death.  
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,  
Real or allegoric, I discern not;  
Nor when: eternal sure—as without end,  
Without beginning; for no date prefixed  
Directs me in the starry rubric set."

So saying, he took (for still he knew his power  
Not yet expired), and to the Wilderness  
Brought back, the Son of God, and left him there,  
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,  
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring Night,  
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,  
Privation mere of light and absent day.  
Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind  
After his aerie jaunt, though hurried sore,  
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,  
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,  
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield  
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head;  
But, sheltered, slept in vain; for at his head  
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams  
Disturbed his sleep. And either tropic now  
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds  
From many a horrid rift abortive poured  
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire  
In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds

Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad  
From the four hinges of the world, and fell  
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,  
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,  
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,  
Or torn up sheer. Ill was thou shrouded then,  
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st  
Unshaken! Nor yet staid the terror there:  
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round  
Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some  
shrieked,

Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou  
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.  
Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair  
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey,  
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar  
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,  
And griesly spectres, which the Fiend had raised  
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.  
And now the sun with more effectual beams  
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet  
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,  
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,  
After a night of storm so ruinous,  
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,  
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.  
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,  
Was absent, after all his mischief done,  
The Prince of Darkness; glad would also seem  
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;  
Yet with no new device (they all were spent),  
Rather by this his last affront resolved,  
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage  
And mad despite to be so oft repelled.  
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,  
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood;  
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,  
And in a careless mood thus to him said:—  
“Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,  
After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,

As earth and sky would mingle ; but myself  
Was distant ; and these flaws, though mortals fear  
    them,

As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heaven,  
Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,  
Are to the main as inconsiderable  
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze  
To man's less universe, and soon are gone.  
Yet, as being oftentimes noxious where they light  
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,  
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,  
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,  
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill.  
This tempest at this desert most was bent ;  
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.  
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject  
The perfect season offered with my aid  
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong  
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way  
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when  
(For both the when and how is nowhere told),  
Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt ;  
For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing  
The time and means ? Each act is rightliest done  
Not when it must, but when it may be best.  
If thou observe not this, be sure to find  
What I foretold thee—many a hard assay  
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,  
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold ;  
Whereof this ominous night that closed thee round,  
So many terrors, voices, prodigies,  
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."

So talked he, while the Son of God went on,  
And staid not, but in brief him answered thus:—

"Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm  
Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none  
I never feared they could, though noising loud  
And threatening nigh : what they can do as signs  
Betokening or ill-boding I condemn  
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;

Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,  
Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,  
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,  
Ambitious Spirit! and would'st be thought my God;  
And storm'st, refused, thinking to terrify  
Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,  
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."

To whom the Fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:—

"Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born!  
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.  
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold  
By all the Prophets; of thy birth, at length  
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,  
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,  
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.  
From that time seldom have I ceased to eye  
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,  
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;  
Till, at the ford of Jordan, whither all  
Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest  
(Though not to be baptized), by voice from Heaven  
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.  
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view  
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn  
In what degree or meaning thou art called  
*The Son of God*, which bears no single sense.  
The Son of God I also am, or was;  
And, if I was, I am; relation stands:  
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought  
In some respect far higher so declared.  
Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,  
And followed thee still on to this waste wild,  
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect  
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.  
Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek  
To understand my adversary, who  
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;  
By parle or composition, truce or league,  
To win him, or win from him what I can.  
And opportunity I here have had

To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee  
Proof against all temptation, as a rock  
Of adamant and as a centre, firm  
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,  
Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,  
Have been before contemned, and may again.  
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,  
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heaven.  
Another method I must now begin."

So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing  
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,  
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,  
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,  
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,  
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared  
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount  
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:  
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set  
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:—

"There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright  
Will ask thee skill. I to thy Father's house  
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is  
best.

Now shew thy progeny; if not to stand,  
Cast thyself down. Safely, if Son of God;  
For it is written, 'He will give command  
Concerning thee to his Angels; in their hands  
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time  
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'"

To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written,  
'Tempt not the Lord thy God.'" He said, and stood;  
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.  
As when Earth's son, Antæus (to compare  
Small things with greatest), in Irassa strove  
With Jove's Alcides, and, oft foiled, still rose,  
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,  
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined.  
Throttled at length in the air expired and fell,  
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,  
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride



Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall;  
And, as that Theban monster that proposed  
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured,  
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite  
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,  
So, strook with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,  
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought  
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,  
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,  
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.  
So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe  
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,  
Who on their plummy vans received Him soft  
From his uneasy station, and upbore,  
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air;  
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down  
On a green bank, and set before him spread  
A table of celestial food, divine  
Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,  
And from the Fount of Life ambrosial drink,  
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired  
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,  
Or thirst; and, as he fed, Angelic quires  
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory  
Over temptation and the Tempter proud:—

“ True Image of the Father, whether throned  
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light  
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrined  
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,  
Wandering the wilderness—whatever place,  
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing  
The Son of God, with Godlike force endued  
Against the attempter of thy Father’s throne  
And thief of Paradise! Him long of old  
Thou didst debel, and down from Heaven cast  
With all his army; now thou hast avenged  
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing  
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,  
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.  
He never more henceforth will dare set foot

In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke.  
For, though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,  
A fairer Paradise is founded now  
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,  
A Saviour, art come down to reinstall;  
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,  
Of tempter and temptation without fear.  
But thou, Infernal Serpent! shalt not long  
Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,  
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down  
Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel'st  
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)  
By this repulse received, and hold'st in Hell  
No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues  
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe  
To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,  
Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,  
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul—  
Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly,  
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,  
Lest he command them down into the Deep,  
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.  
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both Worlds,  
Queller of Satan! On thy glorious work  
Now enter, and begin to save Mankind.”

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,  
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refreshed,  
Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserved,  
Home to his mother's house private returned.

## MILTON'S INTRODUCTION TO SAMSON AGONISTES

*Aristot. Poet. cap. 6. Τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.—Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c., per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.*

### OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM CALLED TRAGEDY

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions—that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in Physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole Book, as a Tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a Chorus of Heavenly Harpings and Song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common

Interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar persons: which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And, though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle, in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be *epistled*—that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only, but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode,—which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allæostropa*. Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit—which is nothing indeed but such œconomy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum—they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

# SAMSON AGONISTES

1667-1671

THE ARGUMENT.—SAMSON, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit awhile and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson—which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption: who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons, and, lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or shew his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which discourse an Ebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe—what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

## THE PERSONS

SAMSON.                      MANOA, the father of Samson.                      DALILA, his wife.  
HARAPHA of Gath.      Public Officer.      Messenger.      Chorus of Danites.

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

**S**AMSON. A little onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little further on;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade.  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil.

Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,  
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw  
The air, imprisoned also, close and damp,  
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends—  
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,  
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.  
This day a solemn feast the people hold  
To Dagon, their sea-idol, and forbid  
Laborious works. Unwillingly this rest  
Their superstition yields me; hence, with leave  
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some ease—  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind  
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm  
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone  
But rush upon me thronging, and present  
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.  
Oh, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold  
Twice by an Angel, who at last, in sight  
Of both my parents, all in flames ascended  
From off the altar where an offering burned,  
As in a fiery column charioting  
His godlike presence, and from some great act  
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?  
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed  
As of a person separate to God,  
Designed for great exploits, if I must die  
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,  
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,  
To grind in brazen fetters under task  
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,  
Put to the labour of a beast, debased  
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I  
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver!  
Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him  
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,  
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.  
Yet stay; let me not rashly call in doubt  
Divine prediction. What if all foretold  
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default?



Whom have I to complain of but myself,  
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,  
Under the seal of silence could not keep,  
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,  
O'ercome with importunity and tears?  
O impotence of mind in body strong!  
But what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom? Vast, unwieldy, burdensome,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,  
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.  
God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal  
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.  
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will  
Of highest dispensation, which herein  
Haply had ends above my reach to know.  
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
And proves the source of all my miseries—  
So many, and so huge, that each apart  
Would ask a life to wail. But, chief of all,  
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
Blind among enemies! O worse than chains,  
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!  
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,  
And all her various objects of delight  
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.  
Inferior to the vilest now become  
Of man or worm, the vilest here excel me:  
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed  
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,  
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
In power of others, never in my own—  
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.  
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse  
Without all hope of day!  
O first-created Beam, and thou great Word,  
“Let there be light, and light was over all,”  
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?

The Sun to me is dark  
And silent as the Moon,  
When she deserts the night,  
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.  
Since light so necessary is to life,  
And almost life itself, if it be true  
That light is in the soul,  
She all in every part, why was the sight  
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,  
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,  
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,  
That she might look at will through every pore?  
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,  
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,  
To live a life half dead, a living death,  
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!  
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;  
Buried, yet not exempt,  
By privilege of death and burial,  
From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs;  
But made hereby obnoxious more  
To all the miseries of life,  
Life in captivity  
Among inhuman foes.  
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear  
The tread of many feet steering this way;  
Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare  
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult—  
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

*Chor.* This, this is he; softly a while;  
Let us not break in upon him.  
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!  
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,  
With languished head unpropt,  
As one past hope, abandoned,  
And by himself given over,  
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds  
O'er-worn and soiled.  
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,  
That heroic, that renowned,

Irresistible Samson? whom, unarmed,  
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could with-  
stand;  
Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid;  
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,  
And, weaponless himself,  
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,  
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail  
Adamantean proof:  
But safest he who stood aloof,  
When insupportably his foot advanced,  
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite  
Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned  
Their plated backs under his heel,  
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.  
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,  
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,  
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day:  
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,  
The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,  
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old—  
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so—  
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.  
Which shall I first bewail—  
Thy bondage or lost sight,  
Prison within prison  
Inseparably dark?  
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)  
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul  
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)  
Imprisoned now indeed,  
In real darkness of the body dwells,  
Shut up from outward light  
To incorporate with gloomy night;  
For inward light, alas!  
Puts forth no visual beam.  
O mirror of our fickle state,

Since man on earth, unparalleled,  
The rarer thy example stands,  
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,  
Strongest of mortal men,  
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.  
For him I reckon not in high estate  
Whom long descent of birth,  
Or the sphere of fortune, raises;  
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,  
Might have subdued the Earth,  
Universally crowned with highest praises.

*Sams.* I hear the sound of words; their sense the air  
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

*Chor.* He speaks: let us draw nigh. Matchless in  
might,

The glory late of Israel, now the grief!  
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown.  
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,  
To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,  
Counsel or consolation we may bring,  
Salve to thy sores: apt words have power to swage  
The tumours of a troubled mind,  
And are as balm to festered wounds.

*Sams.* Your coming, friends, revives me; for I learn  
Now of my own experience, not by talk,  
How counterfeit a coin they are who "friends"  
Bear in their superscription (of the most  
I would be understood). In prosperous days  
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,  
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,  
How many evils have enclosed me round;  
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,  
Blindness; for, had I sight, confused with shame,  
How could I once look up, or heave the head,  
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked  
My Vessel trusted to me from above,  
Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear,  
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God  
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,  
Am I not sung and proverbied for a fool

In every street? Do they not say, "How well  
Are come upon him his deserts"? Yet why?  
Immeasurable strength they might behold  
In me; of wisdom nothing more than mean.  
This with the other should at least have paired;  
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

*Chor.* Tax not divine disposal. Wisest men  
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;  
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.  
Deject not, then, so overmuch thyself,  
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.  
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder  
Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather  
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,  
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

*Sams.* The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased  
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed  
The daughter of an Infidel. They knew not  
That what I motioned was of God; I knew  
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged  
The marriage on, that, by occasion hence,  
I might begin Israel's deliverance—  
The work to which I was divinely called.  
She proving false, the next I took to wife  
(O that I never had! fond wish too late!)  
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,  
That specious monster, my accomplished snare.  
I thought it lawful from my former act,  
And the same end, still watching to oppress  
Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer  
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,  
Who, vanquished with a peal of words, (O weakness!)  
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

*Chor.* In seeking just occasion to provoke  
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness;  
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

*Sams.* That fault I take not on me, but transfer  
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,  
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done

Singly by me against their conquerors,  
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered,  
Deliverance offered. I, on the other side,  
Used no ambition to commend my deeds;  
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the  
doer.

But they persisted deaf, and would not seem  
To count them things worth notice, till at length  
Their lords, the Philistines, with gathered powers,  
Entered Judea, seeking me, who then  
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired—  
Not flying, but forecasting in what place  
To set upon them, what advantaged best.  
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent  
The harass of their land, beset me round;  
I willingly on some conditions came  
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me  
To the Uncircumcised a welcome prey,  
Bound with two cords. But cords to me were threads  
Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew  
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled  
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.  
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,  
They had by this possessed the Towers of Gath,  
And lorded over them whom now they serve.  
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,  
And by their vices brought to servitude,  
Than to love bondage more than liberty—  
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty—  
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,  
Whom God hath of his special favour raised  
As their deliverer? If he aught begin,  
How frequent to desert him and at last  
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

*Chor.* Thy words to my remembrance bring  
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel  
Their great deliverer contemned,  
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit  
Of Madian, and her vanquished kings;  
And how ingrateful Ephraim



Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,  
 Not worse than by his shield and spear,  
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite,  
 Had not his prowess quelled their pride  
 In that sore battle when so many died  
 Without reprieve, adjudged to death  
 For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

*Sams.* Of such examples add me to the roll.  
 Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
 But God's proposed deliverance not so.

*Chor.* Just are the ways of God,  
 And justifiable to men,  
 Unless there be who think not God at all.  
 If any be, they walk obscure;  
 For of such doctrine never was there school,  
 But the heart of the Fool,  
 And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,  
 As to his own edicts found contradicting;  
 Then give the reins to wandering thought,  
 Regardless of his glory's diminution,  
 Till, by their own perplexities involved,  
 They ravel more, still less resolved,  
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable,  
 And tie him to his own prescript,  
 Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,  
 And hath full right to exempt  
 Whomso it pleases him by choice  
 From national obstruction, without taint  
 Of sin, or legal debt;  
 For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,  
 Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,  
 To set his people free,  
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,  
 Against his vow of strictest purity,  
 To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,  
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down, Reason, then; at least, vain reasonings down;

Though Reason here aver  
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:  
Unchaste was subsequent; her stain, not his.

But see! here comes thy reverend sire,  
With careful step, locks white as down,  
Old Manoa: advise  
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

*Sams.* Ay me! another inward grief, awaked  
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

*Man.* Brethren and men of Dan (for such ye seem  
Though in this uncouth place), if old respect,  
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,  
My son, now captive, hither hath informed  
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,  
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

*Chor.* As signal now in low dejected state  
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

*Man.* O miserable change! Is this the man,  
That invincible Samson, far renowned,  
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength  
Equivalent to Angels' walked their streets,  
None offering fight; who, single combatant,  
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,  
Himself an Army—now unequal match  
To save himself against a coward armed  
At one spear's length? O ever-failing trust  
In mortal strength! and, oh, what not in man  
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good  
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?  
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness  
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,  
And such a son as all men hailed me happy:  
Who would be now a father in my stead?  
Oh, wherefore did God grant me my request,  
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?  
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt  
Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand  
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?  
For this did the Angel twice descend? for this  
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant

Select and sacred? glorious for a while,  
 The miracle of men; then in an hour  
 Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,  
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves!  
 Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once  
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,  
 He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall  
 Subject him to so foul indignities,  
 Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

*Sams.* Appoint not heavenly disposition, father.  
 Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
 But justly; I myself have brought them on;  
 Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,  
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned  
 The mystery of God, given me under pledge  
 Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,  
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.  
 This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,  
 But warned by oft experience. Did not she  
 Of Timna first betray me, and reveal  
 The secret wrested from me in her highth  
 Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight  
 To them who had corrupted her, my spies  
 And rivals? In this other was there found  
 More faith, who, also in her prime of love,  
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
 Though offered only, by the secret conceived  
 Her spurious first-born, Treason against me?  
 Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs,  
 And amorous reproaches, to win from me  
 My capital secret, in what part my strength  
 Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might  
 know;  
 Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport  
 Her importunity, each time perceiving  
 How openly and with what impudence  
 She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse)  
 Than undissembled hate) with what contempt  
 She sought to make me traitor to myself.

Yet, the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,  
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,  
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night  
To storm me, over-watched and wearied out,  
At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,  
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,  
Might easily have shook off all her snares;  
But foul effeminacy held me yoked  
Her bond-slave. O indignity, O blot  
To Honour and Religion! servile mind  
Rewarded well with servile punishment!  
The base degree to which I now am fallen,  
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base  
As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
True slavery; and that blindness worse than this,  
That saw not how degenerately I served.

*Man.* I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son—  
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead  
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st  
Find some occasion to infest our foes.  
I state not that; this I am sure—our foes  
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee  
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner  
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,  
To violate the sacred trust of silence  
Deposited within thee—which to have kept  
Tacit was in thy power. True; and thou bear'st  
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault,  
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying;  
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains:  
This day the Philistines a popular feast  
Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim  
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,  
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered  
Thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands—  
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.  
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,  
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,

Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn  
 By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;  
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,  
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
 Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

*Sams.* Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
 That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought  
 To Dagon, and advanced his praises high  
 Among the Heathen round—to God have brought  
 Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths  
 Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal  
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt  
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before  
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols:  
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,  
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not  
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.  
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife  
 With me hath end. All the contest is now  
 'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed,  
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
 His deity comparing and preferring  
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,  
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,  
 But will arise, and his great name assert.  
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive  
 Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him  
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me,  
 And with confusion blank his Worshipers.

*Man.* With cause this hope relieves thee; and  
 these words

I as a prophecy receive; for God  
 (Nothing more certain) will not long defer  
 To vindicate the glory of his name  
 Against all competition, nor will long  
 Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord  
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?  
 Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight

Neglected. I already have made way  
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat  
About thy ransom. Well they may by this  
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,  
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted  
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

*Sams.* Spare that proposal, father; spare the trouble  
Of that solicitation. Let me here,  
As I deserve, pay on my punishment,  
And expiate, if possible, my crime,  
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed  
Secrets of *men*, the secrets of a friend,  
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving  
Contempt and scorn of all—to be excluded  
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,  
The mark of fool set on his front!  
But I *God's* counsel have not kept, his holy secret  
Presumptuously have published, impiously,  
Weakly at least and shamefully—a sin  
That Gentiles in their parables condemn  
To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.

*Man.* Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite;  
But act not in thy own affliction, son.  
Repent the sin; but, if the punishment  
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;  
Or the execution leave to high disposal,  
And let another hand, not thine, exact  
Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps  
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;  
Who ever more approves and more accepts  
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)  
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,  
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;  
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased  
For self-offence more than for God offended.  
Reject not, then, what offered means who knows  
But God hath set before us to return thee  
Home to thy country and his sacred house.  
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert  
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed.



*Sams.* His pardon I implore; but, as for life,  
 To what end should I seek it? When in strength  
 All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,  
 With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts  
 Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,  
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond  
 The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,  
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god  
 I walked about, admired of all, and dreaded  
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront—  
 Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell  
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,  
 Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life  
 At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge  
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
 Of a deceitful Concubine, who shored me,  
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,  
 Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,  
 Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies.

*Chor.* Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,  
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
 Thou could'st repress; nor did the dancing ruby,  
 Sparkling out-poured, the flavour or the smell,  
 Or taste, that cheers the heart of gods and men,  
 Allure thee from the cool crystal'lin stream.

*Sams.* Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed  
 Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure  
 With touch æthereal of Heaven's fiery rod,  
 I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying  
 Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape  
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

*Chor.* O madness! to think use of strongest wines  
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health,  
 When God with these forbidden made choice to rear  
 His mighty Champion, strong above compare,  
 Whose drink was only from the liquid brook!

*Sams.* But what availed this temperance, not complete  
 Against another object more enticing?  
 What boots it at one gate to make defence,

'And at another to let in the foe,  
Effeminately vanquished? by which means,  
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,  
To what can I be useful? wherein serve  
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed?  
But to sit idle on the household hearth,  
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,  
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,  
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,  
Vain monument of strength; till length of years  
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs  
To a contemptible old age obscure.  
Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread,  
Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,  
Consume me, and oft-invoked death  
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

*Man.* Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with  
that gift

Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?  
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,  
Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn.  
But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer  
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay  
After the brunt of battel, can as easy  
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,  
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.  
And I persuade me so. Why else this strength  
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?  
His might continues in thee not for naught,  
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

*Sams.* All otherwise to me my thoughts portend—  
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,  
Nor the other light of life continue long,  
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand;  
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
My hopes all flat: Nature within me seems  
In all her functions weary of herself;  
My race of glory run, and race of shame,  
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

*Man.* Believe not these suggestions, which proceed

From anguish of the mind, and humours black  
That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,  
Must not omit a father's timely care  
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance  
By ransom or how else: meanwhile be calm,  
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

*Sams.* Oh, that torment should not be confined  
To the body's wounds and sores,  
With maladies innumerable  
In heart, head, breast, and reins,  
But must secret passage find  
To the inmost mind,  
There exercise all his fierce accidents,  
And on her purest spirits prey,  
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,  
With answerable pains, but more intense,  
Though void of corporal sense!  
My griefs not only pain me  
As a lingering disease,  
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage;  
Nor less than wounds immedicable  
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,  
To black mortification.  
Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb  
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,  
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.  
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure;  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,  
His destined from the womb,  
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.  
Under his special eye  
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;  
He led me on to mightiest deeds,  
Above the nerve of mortal arm,

Against the Uncircumcised, our enemies:  
But now hath cast me off as never known,  
And to those cruel enemies,  
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,  
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss  
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated  
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.  
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;  
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.  
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,  
No long petition—speedy death,  
The close of all my miseries and the balm.

*Chor.* Many are the sayings of the wise,  
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,  
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,  
And to the bearing well of all calamities,  
All chances incident to man's frail life,  
Consolatories writ  
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,  
Lenient of grief and anxious thought.  
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound  
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,  
Unless he feel within  
Some source of consolation from above,  
Secret refreshings that repair his strength  
And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers! what is Man,  
That thou towards him with hand so various—  
Or might I say contrarious?—  
Temper'st thy providence through his short course:  
Not evenly, as thou rul'st  
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,  
Irrational and brute?  
Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
That, wandering loose about,  
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,  
Heads without name, no more remembered;  
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,  
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,

To some great work, thy glory,  
 And people's safety, which in part they effect.  
 Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft,  
 Amidst their highth of noon,  
 Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no  
     regard

Of highest favours past  
 From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit  
 To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,  
 But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them  
     high—

Unseemly falls in human eye,  
 Too grievous for the trespass or omission;  
 Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword  
 Of heathen and profane, their carcasses  
 To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,  
 Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,  
 And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.  
 If these they scape, perhaps in poverty  
 With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,  
 Painful diseases and deformed,  
 In crude old age;  
 Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering  
 The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,  
 Just or unjust alike seem miserable,  
 For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,  
 The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.  
 What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already!  
 Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn  
 His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this? what thing of sea or land—  
 Female of sex it seems—  
 That, so bedecked, ornate, and gay,  
 Comes this way sailing,  
 Like a stately ship  
 Of Tarsus, bound for the isles  
 Of Javan or Gadire,  
 With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails filled, and streamers waving,  
Courtèd by all the winds that hold them play;  
An amber scent of odorous perfume  
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind?  
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;  
And now, at nearer view, no other certain  
Than Dalila thy wife.

*Sams.* My wife! my traitress! let her not come near me.

*Chor.* Yet on she moves; now stands and eyes thee fixed,

About to have spokè; but now, with head declined,  
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,  
And words addressèd seem into tears dissolvèd,  
Wetting the borders of her silken veil.  
But now again she makes address to speak.

*Dal.* With doubtful feet and wavering resolution  
I camè, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson;  
Which to have merited, without excuse,  
I cannot but acknowledge. Yet, if tears  
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew  
In the perverse event than I foresaw),  
My penance hath not slackenèd, though my pardon  
No way assurèd. But conjugal affection,  
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,  
Hath led me on, desirous to behold  
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,  
If aught in my ability may serve  
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease  
Thy mind with what amends is in my power—  
Though late, yet in some part to recompense  
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

*Sams.* Out, out, Hyæna! These are thy wonted arts,  
And arts of every woman false like thee—  
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray;  
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,  
And reconcilèment move with feignèd remorse,  
Confess, and promise wonders in her change—  
Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
Her husband, how far urgèd his patience bears,



His virtue or weakness which way to assail:  
 Then, with more cautious and instructed skill,  
 Again transgresses, and again submits;  
 That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,  
 With goodness principled not to reject  
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
 'Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
 Entangled with a poisonous bosom-snake,  
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off,  
 As I by thee, to ages an example.

*Dal.* Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour  
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
 But that, on the other side, if it be weighed  
 By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,  
 Or else with just allowance counterpoised,  
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.  
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
 In me, but incident to all our sex,  
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune'  
 Of secrets, then with like infirmity  
 To publish them—both common female faults—  
 Was it not weakness also to make known  
 For importunity, that is for naught,  
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?  
 To what I did thou shew'dst me first the way.  
 But I to enemies revealed, and should not!  
 Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:  
 Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.  
 Let weakness, then, with weakness come to parle,  
 So near related, or the same of kind;  
 Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine  
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not  
 More strength from me than in thyself was found.  
 And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,  
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway  
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,  
 Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable  
 Of fancy; feared lest one day thou would'st leave me  
 As her at Timna; sought by all means, therefore,

How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:  
No better way I saw than by importuning  
To learn thy secrets, get into my power  
Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,  
"Why, then, revealed?" I was assured by those  
Who tempted me that nothing was designed  
Against thee but safe custody and hold.  
That made for me; I knew that liberty  
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,  
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,  
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;  
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,  
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',  
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,  
Fearless at home of partners in my love.  
These reasons in Love's law have passed for good,  
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;  
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,  
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.  
Be not unlike all others, not austere  
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.  
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,  
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

*Sams.* How cunningly the Sorceress displays  
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!  
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither  
By this appears. I gave, thou say'st, the example,  
I led the way—bitter reproach, but true;  
I to myself was false ere thou to me.  
Such pardon, therefore, as I give my folly  
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest  
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,  
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,  
And I believe it—weakness to resist  
Philistian gold. If weakness may excuse,  
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?  
All wickedness is weakness; that plea, therefore,  
With God or Man will gain thee no remission.

But love constrained thee! Call it furious rage  
 To satisfy thy lust. Love seeks to have love;  
 My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way  
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,  
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?  
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,  
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

*Dal.* Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea  
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,  
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,  
 What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;  
 Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,  
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.  
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,  
 That wrought with me. Thou know'st the Magistrates  
 And Princes of my country came in person,  
 Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,  
 Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty  
 And of religion—pressed how just it was,  
 How honourable, how glorious, to entrap  
 A common enemy, who had destroyed  
 Such numbers of our nation: and the Priest  
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,  
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods  
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious  
 Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I  
 To oppose against such powerful arguments?  
 Only my love of thee held long debate,  
 And combated in silence all these reasons  
 With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim,  
 So rife and celebrated in the mouths  
 Of wisest men, that to the public good  
 Private respects must yield, with grave authority  
 Took full possession of me, and prevailed;  
 Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.

*Sams.* I thought where all thy circling wiles would  
 end—

In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy!  
 But, had thy love, still odiously pretended,  
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee

Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.  
I, before all the daughters of my tribe  
And of my nation, chose thee from among  
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st;  
Too well; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,  
Not out of levity, but overpowered  
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;  
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why, then,  
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband—  
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?  
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave  
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,  
Nor under their protection, but my own;  
Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life  
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
Against the law of nature, law of nations;  
No more thy country, but an impious crew  
Of men conspiring to uphold their state  
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends  
For which our country is a name so dear;  
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee;  
To please thy gods thou didst it! Gods unable  
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes  
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction  
Of their own deity, Gods cannot be—  
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.  
These false pretexs and varnished colours failing,  
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear!

*Dal.* In argument with men a woman ever  
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

*Sams.* For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath!  
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

*Dal.* I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken  
In what I thought would have succeeded best.  
Let me obtain forgiveness, of thee Samson;  
Afford me place to shew what recompense  
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,  
Misguided. Only what remains past cure  
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist  
To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,

Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed  
 Where other senses want not their delights—  
 At home, in leisure and domestic ease,  
 Exempt from many a care and chance to which  
 Eyesight exposes, daily, men abroad.  
 I to the Lords will intercede, not doubting  
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide  
 With me, where my redoubled love and care,  
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,  
 May ever tend about thee to old age,  
 With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied  
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

*Sams.* No, no; of my condition take no care;  
 It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;  
 Nor think me so unwary or accursed  
 To bring my feet again into the snare  
 Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,  
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils.  
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,  
 No more on me have power; their force is nulled;  
 So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,  
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.  
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men  
 Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone could hate me,  
 Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me,  
 How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
 Deceivable, in most things as a child  
 Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,  
 And last neglected! How would'st thou insult,  
 When I must live uxorious to thy will  
 In perfect thralldom! how again betray me,  
 Bearing my words and doings to the lords  
 To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile!  
 This gaol I count the house of Liberty  
 To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

*Dal.* Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

*Sams.* Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.  
 At distance I forgive thee; go with that;

Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works  
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
Among illustrious women, faithful wives;  
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold  
Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

*Dal.* I see thou art implacable, more deaf  
To prayers than winds and seas. Yet winds to seas  
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:  
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,  
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.  
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing  
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate,  
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand  
Of infamy upon my name denounced?  
To mix with thy concernments I desist  
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.  
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,  
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;  
On both his wings, one black, the other white,  
Bears greatest names in his wild aerie flight.  
My name, perhaps, among the Circumcised  
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering Tribes,  
To all posterity may stand defamed,  
With malediction mentioned, and the blot  
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.  
But in my country, where I most desire,  
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
I shall be named among the famousest  
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,  
Living and dead recorded, who, to save  
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose  
Above the faith of wedlock bands; my tomb  
With odours visited and annual flowers;  
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim  
Jael, who, with inhospitable guile,  
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed.  
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
The public marks of honour and reward  
Conferred upon me for the piety  
Which to my country I was judged to have shewn.



At this whoever envies or repines,  
I leave him his lot, and like my own.

*Chor.* She's gone—a manifest Serpent by her sting  
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

*Sams.* So let her go. God sent her to debase me,  
And aggravate my folly, who committed  
To such a viper his most sacred trust  
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange  
power,

After offence returning, to regain  
Love once possessed, nor can be easily  
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,  
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

*Sams.* Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end;  
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

*Chor.* It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,  
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,  
That woman's love can win, or long inherit;  
But what it is, hard is to say,  
Harder to hit,

Which way soever men refer it,  
(Much like thy riddle, Samson) in one day  
Or seven though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride  
Had not so soon preferred  
Thy Paranymp, worthless to thee compared,  
Successor in thy bed,  
Nor both so loosely disallied  
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously  
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.  
Is it for that such outward ornament  
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts  
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,  
Capacity not raised to apprehend  
Or value what is best,  
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?  
Or was too much of self-love mixed,  
Of constancy no root infixed,  
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best,  
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,  
Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
Once joined, the contrary she proves—a thorn  
Intestine, far within defensive arms  
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue  
Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms  
Draws him awry, enslaved  
With dotage, and his sense depraved  
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.  
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,  
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favoured of Heaven who finds  
One virtuous, rarely found,  
That in domestic good combines!  
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:  
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,  
And all temptation can remove,  
Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law  
Gave to the man despotic power  
Over his female in due awe,  
Nor from that right to part an hour,  
Smile she or lour:  
So shall he least confusion draw  
On his whole life, not swayed  
By female usurpation, nor dismayed.

But had we best retire? I see a storm.

*Sams.* Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

*Chor.* But this another kind of tempest brings.

*Sams.* Be less abstruse; my riddling days are past.

*Chor.* Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear  
The bait of honeyed words; a rougher tongue  
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,  
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.  
Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him hither  
I less conjecture than when first I saw  
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:  
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

*Sams.* Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

*Chor.* His fraught we soon shall know : he now arrives.

*Har.* I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,  
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;  
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned  
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old  
That Kiriathaim held. Thou know'st me now,  
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard  
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,  
Incredible to me, in this displeased,  
That I was never present on the place  
Of those encounters, where we might have tried  
Each other's force in camp or listed field;  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,  
If thy appearance answer loud report.

*Sams.* The way to know were not to see, but taste.

*Har.* Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune  
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed  
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!  
I should have forced thee soon with other arms,  
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown;  
So had the glory of prowess been recovered  
To Palestine, won by a Philistine  
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st  
The highest name for valiant acts. That honour,  
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,  
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

*Sams.* Boast not of what thou would'st have done,  
but do

What then thou would'st; thou seest it in thy hand.

*Har.* To combat with a blind man I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

*Sams.* Such usage as your honourable Lords  
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed;  
Who durst not with their whole united powers  
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,  
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes

Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,  
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,  
Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me.  
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assigned  
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give  
thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;  
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet  
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,  
Vant-brass and greaves and gauntlet; add thy spear,  
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield:  
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,  
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,  
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,  
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,  
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast  
Again in safety what thou would'st have done  
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

*Har.* Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms  
Which greatest heroes have in battel worn,  
Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
And black enchantments, some magician's art,  
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from  
Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back  
Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.

*Sams.* I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;  
My trust is in the Living God, who gave me,  
At my nativity, this strength, diffused  
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,  
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,  
The pledge of my unviolated vow.  
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,  
Go to his temple, invoke his aid  
With solemnest devotion, spread before him  
How highly it concerns his glory now  
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,  
Which I to be the power of Israel's God

'Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
Offering to combat thee, his Champion bold,  
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:  
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow  
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

*Har.* Presume not on thy God. Whate'er he be,  
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off  
Quite from his people, and delivered up  
Into thy enemies' hand; permitted them  
To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee  
Into the common prison, there to grind  
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,  
As good for nothing else, no better service  
With those thy boisterous locks; no worthy match  
For valour to assail, nor by the sword  
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,  
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

*Sams.* All these indignities, for such they are  
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,  
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me  
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,  
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;  
In confidence whereof I once again  
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,  
By combat to decide whose god is God,  
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

*Har.* Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting  
He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber!

*Sams.* Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove  
me these?

*Har.* Is not thy nation subject to our Lords?  
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee  
As a league-breaker, and delivered bound  
Into our hands; for hadst thou not committed  
Notorious murder on those thirty men  
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,  
Then, like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes?  
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,

Went up with armèd powers thee only seeking,  
To others did no violence nor spoil.

*Sams.* Among the daughters of the Philistines  
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,  
And in your city held my nuptial feast;  
But your ill-meaning politician lords,  
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,  
Appointed to await me thirty spies,  
Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride  
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,  
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.  
When I perceived all set on enmity,  
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,  
I used hostility, and took their spoil,  
To pay my underminers in their coin.  
My nation was subjected to your lords!  
It was the force of conquest; force with force  
Is well ejected when the conquered can.  
But I, a private person, whom my country  
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed  
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts!  
I was no private, but a person raised,  
With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,  
To free my country. If their servile minds  
Me, their Deliverer sent, would not receive,  
But to their masters gave me up for nought,  
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.  
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,  
And had performed it if my known offence  
Had not disabled me, not all your force.  
These shifts refuted, answer thy appelland,  
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,  
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,  
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

*Har.* With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,  
Due by the law to capital punishment?  
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

*Sams.* Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,  
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?



Come nearer; part not hence so slight informed;  
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

*Har.* O Baal-zebul! can my ears unused  
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

*Sams.* No man withholds thee; nothing from thy  
hand

Fear I incurable; bring up thy van;  
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

*Har.* This insolence other kind of answer fits.

*Sams.* Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,  
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down,  
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

*Har.* By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament  
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.

*Chor.* His Giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,  
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,  
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

*Sams.* I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,  
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,  
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

*Chor.* He will directly to the lords, I fear,  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

*Sams.* He must allege some cause, and offered fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
Whether he durst accept the offer or not;  
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.  
Much more affliction than already felt  
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,  
If they intend advantage of my labours,  
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping,  
With no small profit daily to my owners.  
But come what will; my deadliest foe will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;  
The worst that he can give to me the best.  
Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

*Chor.* O, how comely it is, and how reviving  
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,  
When God into the hands of their deliverer  
Puts invincible might,  
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,  
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue  
The righteous, and all such as honour truth!  
He all their ammunition  
And feats of war defeats,  
With plain heroic magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour armed;  
Their armouries and magazins contemns,  
Renders them useless, while  
With wingèd expedition  
Swift as the lightning glance he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,  
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own deliverer,  
And victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.  
Either of these is in thy lot,  
Samson, with might endued  
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved  
May chance to number thee with those  
Whom Patience finally must crown.

This Idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,  
Labouring thy mind  
More than the working day thy hands.  
And yet, perhaps, more trouble is behind;  
For I descry this way  
Some other tending; in his hand  
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,  
Comes on amain, speed in his look.  
By his habit I discern him now  
A public officer, and now at hand.  
His message will be short and voluble.

*Off.* Ebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

*Chor.* His manacles remark him; there he sits.

*Off.* Samson, to thee our Lords thus bid me say:

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,  
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;  
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,  
And now some public proof thereof require  
To honour this great feast, and great assembly.  
Rise, therefore, with all speed, and come along,  
Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,  
To appear as fits before the illustrious Lords.

*Sams.* Thou know'st I am an Ebrew; therefore  
tell them

Our law forbids at their religious rites  
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

*Off.* This answer, be assured, will not content them.

*Sams.* Have they not sword-players, and every sort  
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,  
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,  
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,  
And over-laboured at their public mill,  
To make them sport with blind activity?  
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,  
On my refusal, to distress me more,  
Or make a game of my calamities?  
Return the way thou cam'st; I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

*Sams.* Myself! my conscience, and internal peace.  
Can they think me so broken, so debased  
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever  
Will condescend to such absurd commands?  
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,  
And, in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief,  
To shew them feats, and play before their god—  
The worst of all indignities, yet on me  
Joined with extreme contempt! I will not come.

*Off.* My message was imposed on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

*Sams.* So take it with what speed thy message needs.

*Off.* I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

*Sams.* Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

*Chor.* Consider, Samson; matters now are strained  
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break.  
He's gone and who knows how he may report  
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?  
Expect another message, more imperious,  
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

*Sams.* Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression—so requite  
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to idols,  
A Nazarite, in place abominable,  
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?  
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,  
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

*Chor.* Yet with this strength thou serv'st the  
Philistines,  
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

*Sams.* Not in their idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawful to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil power.

*Chor.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts  
defile not.

*Sams.* Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds:

But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,  
Not dragging? The Philistian Lords command:  
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,  
I do it freely, venturing to displease  
God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,  
Set God behind; which, in his jealousy,  
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.  
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,  
Present in temples at adolatrous rites  
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

*Chor.* How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

*Sams.* Be of good courage; I begin to feel

Some rousing motions in me, which dispose  
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
 I with this messenger will go along—  
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour  
 Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.  
 If there be aught of presage in the mind,  
 This day will be remarkable in my life  
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

*Chor.* In time thou hast resolved: the man returns.

*Off.* Samson, this second message from our Lords  
 To thee I am bid say: Art thou our slave,  
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,  
 And dar'st thou, at our sending and command,  
 Dispute thy coming? Come without delay;  
 Or we shall find such engines to assail  
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,  
 Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.

*Sams.* I could be well content to try their art,  
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious;  
 Yet, knowing their advantages too many,  
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.  
 Masters' commands come with a power resistless  
 To such as owe them absolute subjection;  
 And for a life who will not change his purpose?  
 (So mutable are all the ways of men!)  
 Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

*Off.* I praise thy resolution. Doff these links:  
 By this compliance thou wilt win the Lords  
 To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

*Sams.* Brethren, farewell. Your company along  
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them  
 To see me girt with friends; and how the sight  
 Of me, as of a common enemy,  
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate them  
 I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine;  
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired  
 With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;  
 No less the people, on their holy days,

Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.  
Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself;  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

*Chor.* Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
Great among the Heathen round;  
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand  
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field  
Rode up in flames after his message told  
Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
Of fire; that Spirit that first rushed on thee  
In the camp of Dan,  
Be efficacious in thee now ~~at~~ need!  
For never was from Heaven imparted  
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,  
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.  
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste  
With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile  
He seems: supposing here to find his son,  
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

*Man.* Peace with you, brethren! My inducement  
hither  
Was not at present here to find my son,  
By order of the Lords new parted hence  
To come and play before them at their feast.  
I heard all as I came; the city rings,  
And numbers thither flock: I had no will,  
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.  
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly  
To give ye part with me what hope I have  
With good success to work his liberty.

*Chor.* That hope would much rejoice us to partake  
With thee. Say, reverend sire; we thirst to hear.

*Man.* I have attempted, one by one, the Lords,  
Either at home, or through the high street passing,  
With supplication prone and father's tears,  
To accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner.



Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,  
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;  
That part most revered Dagon and his priests:  
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim  
Private reward, for which both God and State  
They easily would set to sale: a third  
More generous far and civil, who confessed  
They had enough revenged, having reduced  
Their foe to misery beneath their fears;  
The rest was magnanimity to remit,  
If some convenient ransom were proposed.  
What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.

*Chor.* Doubtless the people shouting to behold  
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,  
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

*Man.* His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And numbered down. Much rather I shall choose  
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest  
And he in that calamitous prison left.  
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.  
For his redemption all my patrimony,  
If need be, I am ready to forgo  
And quit. Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

*Chor.* Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons;  
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:  
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age;  
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,  
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

*Man.* It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,  
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled  
With all those high exploits by him achieved,  
And on his shoulders waving down those locks  
That of a nation armed the strength contained.  
And I persuade me God hath not permitted  
His strength again to grow up with his hair  
Garrisoned round about him like a camp  
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose  
To use him further yet in some great service—  
Not to sit idle with so great a gift

Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.  
And, since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,  
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

*Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon  
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love;  
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds, and . . O, what noise!  
Mercy of Heaven! what hideous noise was that?  
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

*Chor.* Noise call you it, or universal groan,  
As if the whole inhabitation perished?  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,  
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

*Man.* Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.  
Oh! it continues; they have slain my son.

*Chor.* Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry  
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

*Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be.  
What shall we do—stay here, or run and see?

*Chor.* Best keep together here, lest, running thither,  
We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the Philistines is fallen:  
From whom could else a general cry be heard?  
The sufferers, then, will scarce molest us here;  
From other hands we need not much to fear.  
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God  
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,  
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?

*Man.* That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

*Chor.* Yet God hath wrought things as incredible  
For his people of old; what hinders now?

*Man.* He can, I know, but doubt to think he will.  
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.  
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

*Chor.* Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;  
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.  
And to our wish I see one hither speeding—  
An Ebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

*Messenger.* O, whither shall I run, or which way fly  
 The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
 Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold?  
 For dire imagination still pursues me.  
 But providence or instinct' of nature seems,  
 Or reason, though disturbed and scarce consulted,  
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
 To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these  
 My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,  
 As at some distance from the place of horror,  
 So in the sad event too much concerned.

*Man.* The accident was loud, and here before thee  
 With rueful cry; yet what it was we hear not.  
 No preface needs; thou seest we long to know.

*Mess.* It would burst forth; but I recover breath,  
 And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

*Man.* Tell us the sum; the circumstance defer.

*Mess.* Gaza yet stands; but all her sons are fallen,  
 All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

*Man.* Sad! but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest  
 The desolation of a hostile city.

*Mess.* Feed on that first; there may in grief be surfeit.

*Man.* Relate by whom.

*Mess.*

By Samson.

*Man.*

That still lessens

The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

*Mess.* Ah! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly  
 To utter what will come at last too soon,  
 Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption  
 Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

*Man.* Suspense in news is torture; speak them out.

*Mess.* Then take the worst in brief: Samson is  
 dead.

*Man.* The worst indeed! O, all my hope's defeated  
 To free him hence! but Death, who sets all free,  
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.  
 What windy joy this day had I conceived,  
 Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves  
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring  
 Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost!

Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first  
How died he; death to life is crown or shame.  
All by him fell, thou say'st; by whom fell he?  
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

*Mess.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

*Man.* Wearied with slaughter, then, or how? explain.

*Mess.* By his own hands.

*Man.* Self-violence! What cause  
Brought him so soon at variance with himself  
Among his foes?

*Mess.* Inevitable cause—  
At once both to destroy and be destroyed.  
The edifice, where all were met to see him,  
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.

*Man.* O lastly over-strong against thyself!  
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.  
More than enough we know; but, while things yet  
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,  
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

*Mess.* Occasions drew me early to this city;  
And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,  
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed  
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,  
When all abroad was rumoured that this day  
Samson should be brought forth, to shew the people  
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.  
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.  
The building was a spacious theatre,  
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,  
With seats where all the Lords, and each degree  
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;  
The other side was open, where the throng  
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand:  
I among these aloof obscurely stood.  
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice  
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,  
When to their sports they turned. Immediately  
Was Samson as a public servant brought,

In their state livery clad: before him pipes  
And timbrels; on each side went armèd guards;  
Both horse and foot before him and behind,  
Archers and slingers, cataphracts, and spears.  
At sight of him the people with a shout  
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,  
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.  
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,  
Came to the place; and what was set before him,  
Which without help of eye might be assayed,  
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed  
All with incredible, stupendious force,  
None daring to appear antagonist.  
At length, for intermission sake, they led him  
Between the pillars; he his guide requested  
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard),  
As over-tired, to let him lean a while  
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,  
That to the archèd roof gave main support.  
He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson  
Felt in his arms, with head a while enclined,  
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,  
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:  
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:—  
“Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed  
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,  
Not without wonder or delight beheld;  
Now, of my own accord, such other trial  
I mean to shew you of my strength yet greater  
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.”  
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed;  
As with the force of winds and waters pent  
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars  
With horrible convulsion to and fro  
He tugged, he shook, tiil down they came, and drew  
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder  
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
Of this, but each Philistian city round,

Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.  
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably  
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;  
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.

*Chor.* O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!  
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled  
The work for which thou wast foretold  
To Israel, and now liest victorious  
Among thy slain self-killed;  
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold  
Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoined  
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more  
Than all thy life had slain before.

*Semichor.* While their hearts were jocund and  
sublime,  
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine  
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,  
Chaunting their idol, and preferring  
Before our Living Dread, who dwells  
In Silo, his bright sanctuary,  
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,  
Who hurt their minds,  
And urged them on with mad desire  
To call in haste for their destroyer.  
They, only set on sport and play,  
Unweetingly importuned  
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.  
So fond are mortal men,  
Fallen into wrath divine,  
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,  
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
And with blindness internal struck.

*Semichor.* But he, though blind of sight,  
Despised, and thought extinguished quite,  
With inward eyes illuminated,  
His fiery virtue roused  
From under ashes into sudden flame,  
And as an evening Dragon came,  
Assailant on the perchèd roosts  
And nests in order ranged



Of tame villatic fowl, but as an Eagle  
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.  
So Virtue, given for lost,  
Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,  
Like that self-begotten bird  
In the Arabian woods embost,  
That no second knows nor third,  
And lay erewhile a holocaust,  
From out her ashy womb now teemed,  
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most  
When most unactive deemed;  
And, though her body die, her fame survives,  
A secular bird, ages of lives.

*Man.* Come, come; no time for lamentation now,  
Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit himself  
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished  
A life heroic, on his enemies  
Fully revenged—hath left them years of mourning,  
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor  
Through all Philistian bounds; to Israel  
Honour hath left and freedom, let but them  
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;  
To himself and father's house eternal fame;  
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this  
With God not parted from him, as was feared,  
But favouring and assisting to the end.  
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
Let us go find the body where it lies  
Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream  
With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off  
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while  
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),  
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,  
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,  
With silent obsequy and funeral train,  
Home to his father's house. There will I build him  
A monument, and plant it round with shade

Of laurel ever green and branching palm,  
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled  
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour and adventures high;  
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,  
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

*Chor.* All is best, though we oft doubt  
What the unsearchable dispose  
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close.  
Oft He seems to hide his face,  
But unexpectedly returns,  
And to his faithful Champion hath in place  
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,  
And all that band them to resist  
His uncontrollable intent.  
His servants He, with new acquist  
Of true experience from this great event,  
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,  
And calm of mind, all passion spent.











